

**COPING WITH SUDDEN AND SHARP REVENUE LOSSES WITHIN BAHRAIN'S
ECONOMIC CRISIS: ACTION RESEARCH AS A MEANS TO UNDERSTAND
WRONG TRAITS AND TO IDENTIFY AND OVERCOME THE HIDDEN ROOTS**

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by

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Abstract

This DBA research investigates why Organisation A (Org. A), a specialised consultancy service provider of business processes and strategic Information Technology (IT), had experienced revenue losses from June 2014 onwards and continuously during 2015 and 2016. In 2008, Org. A commenced its operations in Bahrain when oil prices were fluctuating between US\$110–140. During this time, it secured two large government projects which ensured work for five to seven years. While the outlook for Org. A was positive, a drop in oil prices hit Bahrain's economy in June 2014, which contributed to a long-term 75% profit loss. The revenue losses coincided when oil prices dropped to less than US\$40 in June 2014, creating severe economic hardships on Bahrain's small- and medium-sized organisations (macro-economic conditions). The drop in oil prices drove the government to stall large and new infrastructure projects worth over US\$350–400 million (assess outer-world influences). An additional cost-cutting step was to withdraw government-sponsored utility subsidies to the community. This environment compelled Org. A to presume that the drop in oil prices and the economic crisis (outside causes) were the reasons behind its revenue losses. Org. A also presumed that the government would favour locally owned organisations over foreign-owned organisations, and this perception hindered Org. A from seeking advice and financial help from the primary government funding organisation (meso-economic conditions).

To explore the reasons behind Org. A's revenue losses, this DBA research applied an Action Research (AR) strategy with a four-step AR cycle (constructing, planning action, taking action, and evaluating action). In addition to the core, underlying AR strategies, three other qualitative research strategies were employed to collect data. These efforts included the action research set with seven comparable, independent and diversified small and medium organisations and Org. A.

At the beginning of this DBA research, a prevailing presumption within Org. A had been that 'outside causes' associated with the drop in oil prices and the economic crisis were

the primary causes of its revenue losses. However, as this DBA research discovered, such focus on the 'outside causes' was a barrier for Org. A to detect the 'inside causes' within the organisation that had been primarily responsible for its revenue losses.

Findings suggest that 'outside causes' were conditions that imposed challenges to any of the investigated seven comparable, independent and diversified organisations and Org. A. Similarly, the findings do not show that Org. A's revenue losses had been caused by the government's discriminatory practices over foreign-owned organisations. The findings showed that, unlike the other seven comparable organisations, Org. A had experienced a lack of organisational knowledge, competencies, and self-efficacies, leaving it incapable of responding to the economic crisis.

This understanding developed through this DBA research allowed taking jointly built strategies within Org. A to resolve the situation together with whom the problem relates to within Org. A, as shown through: (Table 43), (Table 44), (Table 45), (Table 46), (Table 47) and (Table 48) to respond to similar future economic crises.

Key words: past economic crises, SMEs, revenue losses, low oil prices, macro-economy, meso-economy, micro-economy, leadership competencies, leader self-efficacies, networking

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Glossary of Terms

ACCC	:	Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
ACT	:	Australian Capital Territory
AGM	:	Assistant General Manager
AmCham	:	American Chamber of Commerce
AR	:	Action Research
AU\$:	Australian Dollar
BSC	:	Balanced Scorecard
BBBF	:	Bahrain British Business Forum
BBC	:	British Broadcasting Corporation
BCCI	:	Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry
BD	:	Bahraini Dinar
BNA	:	Bahrain News Agency
BCS	:	British Computer Society
BTB	:	Bahrain Tender Board
CA	:	Content Analysis
CEO	:	Chief Executive Officer
CFO	:	Chief Financial Officer
CIO/CXO	:	Chief Information Officer
CIPD	:	Chartered Institute of Personnel Development
CMI	:	Chartered Management Institute
CMO	:	Chief Medical Officer
COBIT	:	Control Objectives for IT
COMEX	:	International IT and Telecommunication Exhibition
CRM	:	Customer Relationship Manager
CXO	:	Customer Experience Officer
D.I.P	:	Description, Interpretation, Presumption
EDB	:	Economic Development Board
EOQ	:	Economic Order Quantity
EWA	:	Electricity and Water Authority

FM	:	Finance Manager
GAP	:	Government Action Plan
GCC	:	Gulf Cooperation Council
GDP	:	Gross Domestic Product
GE	:	General Electric
GITEX	:	Gulf Information Technology Exhibition
HoD	:	Head of Department
HR	:	Human Resources
HRM	:	Human Resources Management
ICT	:	Information and Communication Technology
IDC	:	International Data Corporation
IMI	:	Identify, Measure, Implement
ISO	:	International Standard Organisation
IT	:	Information Technology
ITM	:	Industrial and Management Technology Methods
JETRO	:	Japan External Trade Organisation
LMRA	:	Labour Market Regulatory Authority
LoY	:	Look Over Your Shoulder
LSE	:	Leader Self-efficacy
LSI	:	Lighting Service Inc.
MBO	:	Management by Objective
MEED	:	Middle East Economic Digest
MM	:	Marketing Manager
MoH	:	Ministry of Housing
MOIC	:	Ministry of Industry and Commerce
MoU	:	Memorandum of Understanding
MoW	:	Ministry of Works
MP	:	Managing Partner
MNS	:	Multinational School
NRUR	:	National Research University in Russia

NSW	:	New South Wales
OECD	:	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OM	:	Operations Manager
PAR	:	Participatory Action Research
PB	:	Per Barrell
RPA	:	Robotic Process Automation
R&S	:	Recruitment and Selection
SABSA	:	Sherwood Applied Business Security Architecture
SDF	:	Saudi Development Fund
SM	:	Sales Manager
SME	:	Small and Medium Enterprise
SWOT	:	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TA	:	Thematic Analysis
THMC	:	Thattai Hindu Merchants Community
UAE	:	United Arab Emirates
UK	:	United Kingdom
UoL	:	University of Liverpool
USA	:	United States of America
US\$:	United States dollar
WTO	:	World Trade Organisation

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Declaration

I declare that this DBA research has been composed solely by me and that it has not been submitted and/or accepted for the award of any other degree in any university or institution of higher education. This DBA research contains no material previously published or written by any other person, except where referenced or acknowledged.

Signature: Aloma Jayasundera

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter is divided into six sections. (1.1) discusses the purpose of this DBA research, which involves uncovering the reasons for revenue losses at Org. A. (1.2) examines the economic crisis, Org. A's revenue losses, and initial presumptions. (1.3) identifies the research questions presented at the macro level (1.3.1), the meso level (1.3.2), and the micro level (1.3.3). (1.4) discusses the research aim and goal. (1.5) discusses the research scope and the AR approach. This chapter closes with the research outline (1.6) and a rich picture showing the roadmap of this DBA research.

1.1. Uncovering the reasons for revenue losses at Org. A, a foreign-owned SME in Bahrain

This DBA research was conducted to address two challenges facing Org. A. First, it investigated the problems that led to revenue losses at Org. A, which included a literature review. The second step, based on the outcomes of the first step, involved taking action to change and improve the situation within Org. A.

Org. A is a specialised consultancy service provider of business processes and strategic Information Technology (IT) that commenced operations in Bahrain in 2008. During this year, Org. A secured two large government projects that ensured work for five to seven years when oil prices fluctuated between US\$110-140 per barrel (pb). While the outlook for Org. A appeared positive, a drop in oil prices that hit Bahrain's economy in June 2014 contributed to a long-term 75% profit loss. At this point, it was necessary to investigate Org. A's inside operations to uncover the reasons for revenue losses.

The revenue losses coincided when oil prices dropped to less than US\$40 in June 2014, creating severe economic hardships on Bahrain's small-and medium-sized organisations. In this environment, the government decided to stall large and new infrastructure projects worth over US\$350–400 million. An additional cost-cutting step was to withdraw government-sponsored utility subsidies to the community. Delaying these contracts

negatively impacted Org. A's income, which was dependent on government-sponsored projects.

The next section (1.2) examines the economic crisis, Org. A's revenue losses, and initial presumptions.

1.2. An economic crisis, revenue losses, and initial presumptions

Initially, Org. A presumed that the drop in oil prices and the government-imposed austerity steps caused its revenue losses from June 2014 onwards (1.2.1). Another presumption was that the government had ceased financial and advisory support to foreign-owned organisations (1.2.2). The macro-economic conditions outlined in (1.2.1) identify challenges encountered by any organisation operating under a disruptive economic setting. The meso-economic conditions outlined in (1.2.2) show challenges that contribute to operating costs but do not impact the organisation's profit/loss. The next step was to investigate whether internal challenges hindered the organisation's leadership from responding to the economic crisis (1.2.3).

1.2.1. Bahrain's economic crisis (macro-economic conditions)

Initially, Org. A presumed its revenue losses since June 2014 were due to the drop in oil prices leading to an economic crisis, which generated a considerable budget deficit in the government coffers. As one step towards addressing the budget deficit, the government decided to withdraw government-sponsored utility subsidies to the community. According to Hamilton (1983) and Ederington and Guan (2010), oil price fluctuations negatively impact a country's macro economy (4.1). Rising oil prices reduce a country's GDP and disrupt the direct and indirect dependants' earnings (4.1.1) whereas a drop in oil prices leads to reduced profits, thus reducing the actual value of an organisation's assets and disrupting its balance sheets (Deloitte, 2019). Analysing the initial observations, as told by Deloitte (2019), except for the drop in oil prices, the rest of the causes could not be calculated from a macro-economic condition.

The following section (1.2.2) discusses whether the government prevented foreign-owned organisations from gaining support through discriminatory practices.

1.2.2. Discriminatory practices impacting foreign-owned organisations (meso-economic conditions)

Org. A refrained from seeking external financial help to lower its operating costs until the economic situation improved. Initially, Org. A presumed the government would favour locally owned organisations over foreign-owned organisations. This perception hindered Org. A from seeking financial help from approaching Tamkeen, a semi-autonomous, primary government-funding organisation. Tamkeen's objective is to provide loan and advisory support to all SMEs regardless of ownership and size. Tamkeen's segment-based packages are in line with the market needs of SMEs (Tamkeen, 2018). Tamkeen also provides coaching and mentoring to all organisations at different maturity levels. An additional hindrance was payback terms; limited collateral assets prevented Org. A from seeking required help. Org. A also neglected to benefit from Tamkeen's coaching and mentoring support that would have guided loan applications.

The World Bank flagship report 2006–2009 showed that 31% of SMEs found access to finance to be the most significant barrier to business growth (Wang, 2016). Compared to large organisations, government organisations hesitate to fund SMEs, with rejection rates as high as 75% (Bloovo, 2016). Younger organisations that lack credit, lack understanding of the SME environment, and have limited management and record-keeping abilities rely on informal financing steps over banks (Oum, Harvie and Narjoka, 2011). Similarly, SMEs with limited collateral also face credit challenges and pay higher-than-average interest rates (Alrabeei and Kasi, 2014). Furthermore, a lack of experienced mentors to help SMEs develop business plans and financial reports also restricts access to funding (Bloovo, 2016).

The following section (1.2.3) investigates whether internal challenges hindered the organisation's leadership from responding to the economic crisis.

1.2.3. Detecting organisational particularities (micro-economic conditions)

This section addresses Org. A's negligence to respond to the drop in oil prices from the micro level. During Bahrain's 'golden era'¹ from 2008 to 2011, Org. A managed to secure two large government projects², which ensured work for five to seven years. However, in 2015, the government decided to stall large and new infrastructure projects worth over US\$350–400 million, which disrupted Org. A's income pipeline. Unfortunately, winning these government projects interrupted Org. A's business development efforts with the private sector. While Org. A sought business opportunities beyond Bahrain, this move neglected to generate satisfactory results.

An additional observation was, since Org. A at its inception was hand-picked to receive two large government projects, it presumed that it was by default shortlisted to acquire similar future projects. Bahrain is a small country, and its business circle is well informed of government tenders and tender pricing practices. As Org. A was not within the business circle, this meant it missed guidance on tender culture. A further obstacle included the employees' myopic view of the value offered by business networks.

Developing a strong network offers advice, support, and information through multiple resources (2.6). Neglecting this important activity adversely impacted Org. A. At the outset, it was also observed that Org. A's employees did not see the benefit of expanding their customer base through networking. For an organisation to succeed, maintaining a good network with the family or personal relationships is important (Osborne, 1993). New business leaders find it hard to develop their network strategically due to the entrepreneurial process's uncertainty, as seen by Engel, Kaandorp and Elfring (2017). Due to their inability to link entrepreneurially in the early days of the organisation, as stated by Hite (2005), business leaders lose crucial resources that flow through the network. The leaders' prior network experience plays an influential role during the early stage, giving the novice leader much-needed confidence to identify related challenges

¹ Budget surplus

² Closed contracts are awarded by some government organisations to hand-picked organisations.

(Zheng, Ahsan and DeNoble, 2019). To be productive, the leader must be proactive, and to grow, the leader must also reach a broader business circle (Ducker, 2014).

Networking should not be limited to the start-up stage. Rather, organisations should continually rely on networks for advice, support, and information through multiple resources (Johannisson et al. 1994). Under uncertain economic conditions, to reduce the perceived risks, resource holders, both employees and investors, should seek information from well-regarded organisations or individuals (Ritter, Wilkinson and Johnston, 2004). Org. A, by neglecting to identify this crucial requirement, closed its doors to an information flow from the business circle.

The next section (1.3) identifies the research questions presented at the macro level (1.3.1), the meso level (1.3.2), and the micro level (1.3.3).

1.3. Primary research question: What were the causes of Org A's revenue losses?

This DBA research addressed the primary research question: "What were the causes of Org. A's revenue losses?" This primary question generated a series of research questions that addressed the macro-, meso-, and micro-economic conditions. Research questions addressing the primary question at the macro level (1) (1.3.1) and the primary question at the meso level (2) (1.3.2) were from chapter (4)'s data. Similarly, the primary question at the micro level (3) (1.3.3) was from chapter (5)'s data.

Many contributory factors helped to compile the research questions. Initially, the leadership at Org. A presumed its revenue losses were due to a drop in oil prices and the economic crisis. Through informal discussions with its actors, it was observed that Org. A's leadership considered whether 'inside causes' contributed to its revenue losses. The literature review helped to identify contributing factors resulting from a drop in oil prices (macro-economy). The literature review also helped to identify challenges faced by other SMEs from a global perspective. Additionally, it was observed that Org. A had made poor

decisions based on emotion rather than logic, which is a similar scenario observed in the 'dot-com-bubble' crash. These findings helped to formulate research question (1) (1.3.1).

An additional presumption was that the government's discriminatory practices hindered foreign-owned organisations from benefitting from its financial and advisory support. Meetings with several stakeholders showed there were no discriminatory practices from the government extended to foreign-owned organisations. These actions helped to formulate the research question (2) (1.3.2). Lastly, by aligning the workplace problem, research aim and goal, it was observed that macro- and meso-economic conditions contribute to operating costs but do not impact the organisation's profit/loss. As a result, the third research question (1.3.3) focusing on the micro-economic conditions emerged through the research. Additionally, comparing Org. A's operations with other comparable organisations helped identify questionable practices. This exploration stage helped formulate relevant sub-questions.

Primary question at the macro level (1):

1.3.1. What was the impact of Bahrain's economic crisis on Org. A's revenue losses?

Sub-questions:

- ✓ *What impact did Bahrain's economic crisis have on stakeholders experiencing sales and profit losses?*
- ✓ *What impact did Bahrain's economic crisis have on stakeholders experiencing increased utility charges?*
- ✓ *What impact did Bahrain's economic crisis have on stakeholders experiencing receiving late payments?*
- ✓ *What impact did Bahrain's economic crisis have on the local culture discouraging outsiders from the business circle?*

Primary question at the meso-level (2):

1.3.2. What was the influence of discriminatory practices impacting foreign-owned organisations on Org. A's revenue losses?

Sub-questions:

- ✓ *How were foreign-owned organisations kept informed of Tamkeen's loan and advisory support without being discriminated against based on ownership?*
- ✓ *How were foreign-owned organisations provided with Tamkeen's business development programme support without being discriminated against based on ownership?*
- ✓ *How were foreign-owned organisations provided with Tamkeen's training and wage support programme support to hire, train, or increase salaries of Bahraini employees without being discriminated against based on ownership?*
- ✓ *How were foreign-owned organisations provided with Tamkeen's coaching and mentoring without being discriminated against based on ownership?*

Primary question at the micro level (3):

1.3.3. What was the impact of organisational particularities on Org. A's revenue losses?

Sub-questions:

- ✓ *What was the impact of the underlying organisational particularities on the role of failed or stalled government projects?*
- ✓ *What was the impact of the underlying organisational particularities on the implied remedial steps towards survival and sustainability?*
- ✓ *How did the underlying organisational particularities lead to experiencing challenges when obtaining Tamkeen's financial assistance?*
- ✓ *What were the underlying organisational particularities highlighting the Tender Board's role towards allocating government tender quotas?*

This is followed by introducing the research aim (1.4.1) and goal (1.4.2) through section (1.4).

1.4. Research aim and goal

The aim and goal of this DBA research are introduced in this section.

1.4.1. The research aim

The aim of this DBA research was to answer the question “What were the causes of Org. A’s revenue losses?” This was accomplished by employing a series of research questions through macro-(1.3.1), meso-(1.3.2), and micro-(1.3.3) economic conditions, through data presented in chapters (4) and (5).

1.4.2. The research goal

The goal of this DBA research was to address the challenges Org. A’s team was facing through the following three phases:

1. The first phase was to engage in dialogues with stakeholders to construct the problem (7.3.1). Step (1) involved building practical and theoretical foundations that were needed to identify the problem and formulate the primary research question.
2. The second phase involved designing the action research plan. This phase involved fact-finding to evaluate learning gained from Step 1 (7.3.2). This phase created the foundation for the next level.
3. Taking action as a scholar-practitioner included the implementation of the plan. Taking a collaborative approach with participants, strategies were executed to change and improve the situation within Org. A (7.3.3).

The next section (1.5) discusses the research scope and the AR approach applicable to this DBA research.

1.5. Research scope and AR approach

The scope was limited to investigate the causes for revenue losses at Org. A and collaborative knowledge development and action design that can be put into practice (Participatory Action Research-PAR). This was addressed by employing a series of research questions from macro-(1.3.1), meso-(1.3.2) and micro-(1.3.3) economic

aspects. The first phase was to build the problem through stakeholder dialogues with (7.3.2). This scope also addressed the role of the scholar-practitioner as a knowledge-broker and the primary researcher with Org. A and other organisations. However, this scope only addressed strategy implementations and recommendations for Org. A rather than all the stakeholders involved in this DBA research. The rich picture shows the coordinated intervention strategies of the stakeholder engagement process to depict a clearer roadmap on how the data was gathered. The timeframe of the stakeholders approached and the knowledge it contributed and where the knowledge is documented is shown in (Figure 1). The research outcomes are addressed through organisational and leadership challenges.

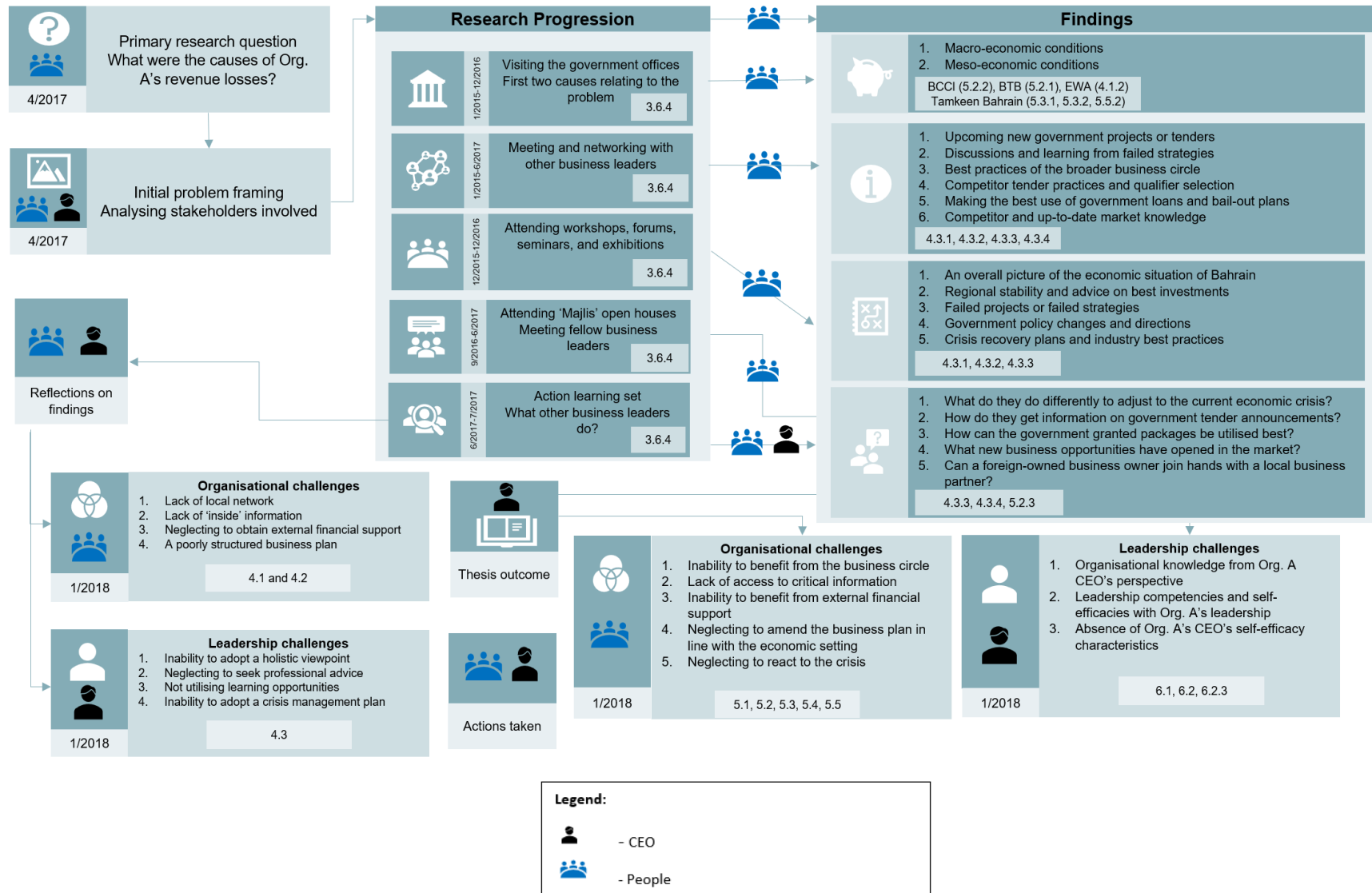
The next and the last section of this chapter (1.6) outlines the rich picture of the roadmap of this DBA research.

1.6. Research outline

This DBA research is comprised of eight chapters, and the remaining sections are organised as follows: Chapter (2) assesses literature relating to SME challenges from macro-, meso- and micro-economic conditions, on a regional and global scale. Chapter (3) discusses the theoretical underpinnings of the research methodology. Chapter (4) presents the causes of Org. A's revenue losses and the process employed to collect and analyse data. Chapter (5) discusses organisational knowledge, competencies and self-efficacies within Org. A. Chapter (6) discusses organisational knowledge, competencies, and self-efficacies within Org. A's leadership team and their inability to respond to the economic crisis. Conclusions, recommendations and action implementations are presented in chapter (7), reflecting on actions and changes achieved from a first-, second-, and third-person perspective. Finally, chapter (8) reflects on the learning journey.

The next chapter assesses literature on SME challenges based on macro-, meso- and micro-economic conditions, and were evaluated from a regional and global aspect.

Figure 1: Overall process of the research undertaken



Chapter 2: Literature Review

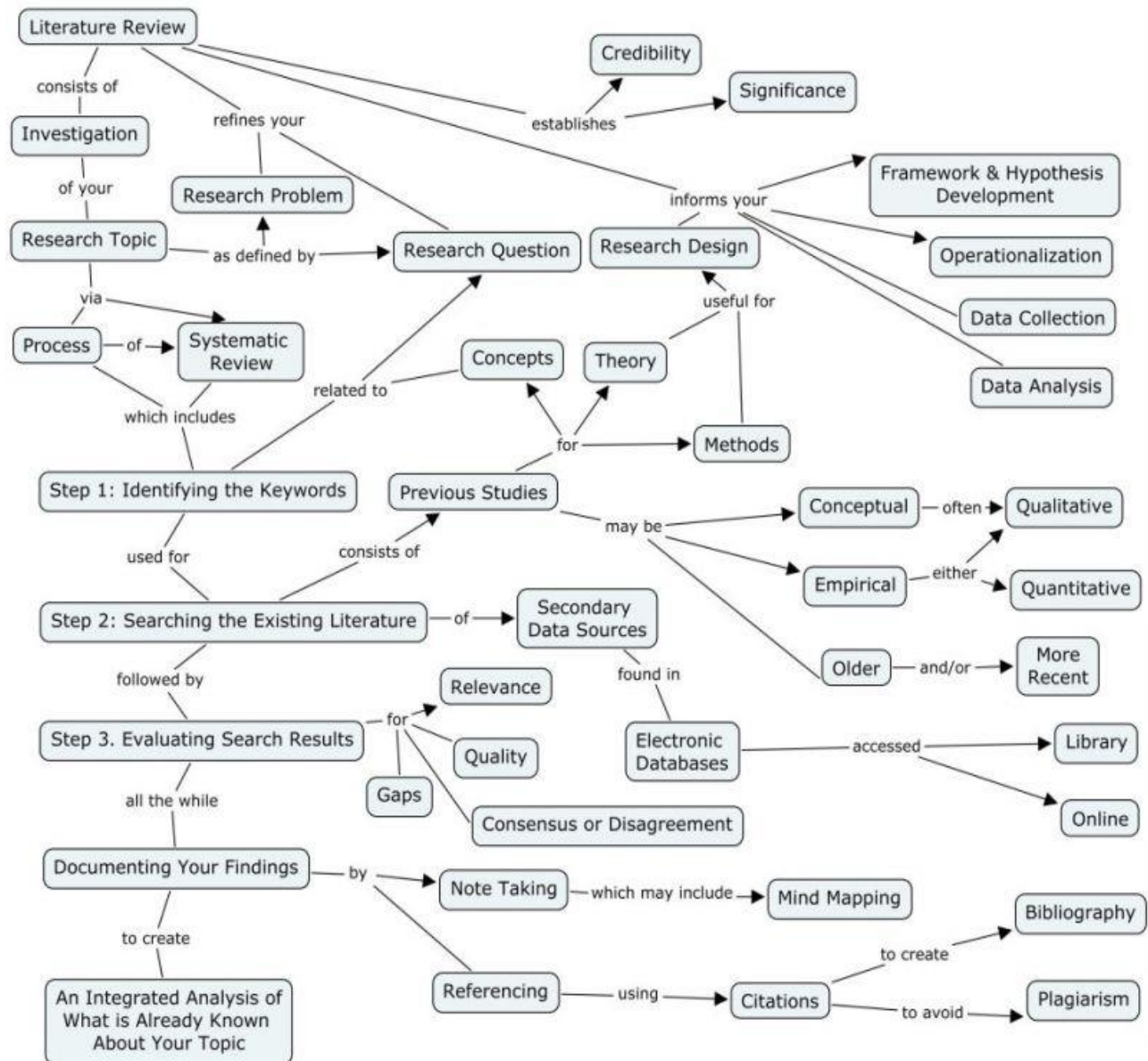
This chapter assesses the literature on SME challenges based on macro-, meso- and micro-economic conditions, evaluated from a regional and global perspective. (2.1) sees the current economic crisis from a similar economic crisis, the 'dot-com bubble' crash. (2.2) discusses Bahrain's economic crisis (macro-economic conditions). (2.3) addresses discriminatory practices that impact foreign-owned organisations (meso-economic conditions). (2.4) identifies organisational knowledge within the leadership followed by (2.5) leadership competencies and self-efficacies from a leader's perspective (micro-economic conditions). (2.6) highlights the importance of social networking, and the chapter ends by incorporating SME behaviour and related approach (2.6.1).

The UoL online library was the primary search engine for gathering credible resources. This library also directed the researcher to partnering online referencing sites such as Google Scholar, Emerald, Elsevier, ProQuest, and EBSCOhost. The study limited the search to current and credible literature that focused on relevant keywords. As shown in (Figure 2), this core literature provided a deep understanding of the existing research and presented the arguments relevant to the research topic, comparing, contrasting, and synthesising relevant scholars' views to provide a theoretical foundation for this DBA research.

Sources to examine the key literature included articles from leading academic journals, peer-reviewed articles, specialist journals, books and expert/practitioner material. These sources focused on past crises to indicate initial clues, a drop in oil prices contributing to an organisation's revenue losses, SME challenges operating in foreign countries, and SME organisational and leadership challenges. From this exploration, the following core themes emerged: organisational and leadership challenges that hinder operating in an economic crisis, leadership competencies and self-efficacies within the leadership, leadership, networking and SME theories and strategies to resolve the evolving problems. (Figure 2) helped to understand the steps to be followed in organising this literature review chapter and what information these steps generated. Bastalich (2020) says effectively

managing and reading literature is critical and consists of several phases; searching, recording, prioritising, retrieving, reading and writing, critiquing and filing, and moving across these steps can be non-sequential.

Figure 2: Organising and reading literature



Source: Bastalich (2020, p.2)

2.1. Past economic crises: 'dot-com bubble' crash

The 'dot-com bubble' period generated a euphoric mindset inspiring hope among business leaders and entrepreneurs to launch 'dot-com' companies. These business leaders and entrepreneurs presumed that online companies would generate millions. However, history shows that these companies were unsuccessful, and those that were successful were overvalued, leaving investors with significant losses (US\$ 5 trillion). The underlying causes behind the 'dot-com bubble' crash were related to problems occurring in the stock market while investors were mesmerised by new, unproven business ideas (Smith, 2012). During this period, market actors neglected to amend business plans to address market warnings and market pulling drives, and instead focused on unproven innovations. By solely focusing on numerical values and overlooking how to generate cash flow, these actors overlooked the numerous warning signals of a possible burst.

Additionally, overvalued stocks of technology companies neglected to amend their business models to fit the market progression, leading to poor decision making (Smith, 2012). During the 'dot-com bubble' period, market actors neglected to set long-term goals and understand how to invest their capital and expand their portfolio (Lewis, 2020). In addition, financial analysts began to consider not only the profitability of companies, but also inflation, interest rates and the growing value of intangible assets and brands that influence stock prices (Wheale and Amin, 2003).

Concurrently, market actors had overlooked underlying rules of the market and signs that the bubble was going to rupture (Elliott, 2004). However, instead of relying on logical reasoning, these emotionally driven actors were following speculation and the wrong traits (Lewis, 2020). The primary causes behind the bubble's burst included 1) ignoring how cash flow was being generated and focusing solely on numerical values; and 2) overvalued stocks, especially for technology companies (Smith, 2012). The market actor's behaviour and how they acted in uncertain times like the 'dot-com bubble' were primarily based on psychological influences connected with heuristic bias, frame dependence and ineffective pricing (Wheale and Amin, 2003).

2.1.1. The unseen roots below wrong traits

The 'dot-com bubble' period shows the risk of being emotionally driven by speculation and hopes instead of maintaining logical reasoning (Lewis, 2020). Additionally, market actors must set long-term, realistic goals in an economic crisis and learn to make capital investments that grow their portfolios (Lewis, 2020). This is achieved by understanding the investor's risk and tolerance levels. Portfolio diversification reduces the investor's potential risks and losses, which is essential while operating in an economic crisis.

The following section (2.2) explains literature relating to the macro-economic conditions from four aspects. (2.2.1) explains the drop in oil prices contributing to an organisation's sales and profit losses, followed by (2.2.2) analysing the increased utility charges on an organisation's profit losses. The impact of oil prices leading to receiving late payments is addressed through (2.2.3) and is followed by analysis of the impact of local culture that discourages outsiders from the business circle (2.2.4).

2.2. Bahrain's economic crisis (macro-economic conditions)

In June 2014, the drop in oil prices caused the government to take two impactful cost-cutting steps. First, the government decided to stall large and new infrastructure projects worth over US\$350–400 million. Second, it withdrew government-sponsored utility subsidies for the community (EWA, 2018). With 99% of organisations in Bahrain being SMEs, these decisions resulted in direct dependants of government projects losing their primary income and customers (BNA, 2015; MEED, 2018).

2.2.1. Drop in oil prices contributing to an organisation's sales and profit losses

A drop in oil prices negatively impacts an organisation's performance (Basha, 2014). However, UIHaq (2017) argues that despite a drop in oil prices, an organisation's revenue can grow, but profit margins will decrease due to the high operating costs. As the organisation's performance decreases, investors become discouraged and consumers reduce consumption of durable goods, which increases challenges for the corporate sector (Pindyck, 1991; Kilian and Lee, 2014). While researchers agree that fluctuating oil

prices impact other factors, Berument, Ceylan and Dogan (2010) argue that the impact of the drop in oil prices varies across nations during an economic crisis. Arouri and Nguyen (2010) argue that the impact is across sectors.

2.2.2. Increased utility charges

Increased utility charges place excessive pressure on small businesses and undermines their long-term profitability. According to Energy Consumers Australia (2018), increased utility charges over the past 10 years have negatively impacted the competitiveness of Australian SMEs. Even with severe cost-cutting steps, Australian SMEs are challenged to curtail operating costs (Koehn, 2017). Likewise, 62% of small British companies are impacted by increased utility charges (LSI Energy, 2017). (Figure 3) shows that due to the early stages of the revised utility charges, SMEs in Bahrain may not have experienced the full impact. This hinders the ability to view the increased utility charges and analyses the full impact across Bahraini SMEs due to the lack of available studies.

Figure 3: Bahrain's predicted utility tariffs

Electricity and Water Tariffs




Electricity Consumption Tariff for years 2016 – 2019

For 30 days' consumption

Customer Category

Domestic for Bahrainis with more than one account, non-Bahrainis and others

Electricity Consumption Unit

Monthly Fixed Charge (BD)

Electricity Usage Charge (Unit)

Year 2016

Year 2017

Year 2018

Year 2019

Consumption Units

First 3000

3001 – 5000

Above 5000

kilowatt-hour (kWh)

1,000

6 Fils

13 Fils

19 Fils

13 Fils

18 Fils

22 Fils

21 Fils

23 Fils

25 Fils

All units @ 29 Fils

Domestic for Bahrainis with more than one account, non-Bahrainis and others

Water Consumption Unit

Monthly Fixed Charge (BD)

Water Usage Charge (Unit)

Year 2016

Year 2017

Year 2018

Year 2019

Consumption Units

First 60

61 – 100

Above 100

Cubic Meter (m³)
1000 liters 220 Imperial Gallons

1,000

80 Fils

200 Fils

300 Fils

200 Fils

300 Fils

400 Fils

450 Fils

500 Fils

600 Fils

All units @ 750 Fils

Page 1 of 1

Source: Electricity and Water Authority (2018)

2.2.3. Impact of the drop in oil prices leading to receiving late payments

For some cultures, late payment is a norm (Massoud, Saunders and Scholnick, 2011; Young, 2018). These norms shift the financial burdens throughout the supply chain, passing cash flow problems from one entity to another (Scholnick, Massoud and Saunders, 2013). Customers become more demanding and less willing to accept risks, shifting those risks of delayed payments further down the supply chain (Chung, 2013). Within the construction industry, late payment or non-payment is a common practice (Abdul-Rahman, Kho and Wang, 2013) that tends to result in a negative net cash flow (Ranyard and McHugh, 2012). However, sub-contractors and general contractors agree that late payments are acceptable, as long as they are paid (Arditi and Chotibhongs, 2005).

2.2.4. Local culture discourages outsiders from the business circle

The cultural qualities addressed in this section are common across all Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCC)³ countries and are not limited to Bahrain. GCC business leaders restrict their network to GCC nationals who share religious and cultural beliefs and, therefore, shy away from forming business relations with foreigners (Ghauri and Fang, 2001; Ourfali, 2015; Najm, 2015). Business relationships serve as an important vehicle when doing business in ‘high context’ cultures such as the Middle East⁴ (Weir, 2001; Hofstede, 2015; O’Dell, 2017). In high context cultures respect for family members and business partners rank highly (Al-Wugayan and Rao, 2004). Furthermore, Arabic cultures value relationships and exhibit an immense level of trust among the community (Najm, 2015). According to Ourfali (2015), cultural practices often impede local nationals from socialising with an ‘outsider’ to their circle.

³ Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman

⁴ Bahrain, Cyprus, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Iran, Israel, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Qatar, Turkey, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Yemen

2.2.5. Concluding remarks associated with Bahrain's economic crisis (macro-economic conditions)

Four challenges due to a drop in oil prices were identified from macro-economic conditions. First, despite a drop in oil prices, an organisation's revenue can grow, but profit margins will decrease due to the high operating costs. Second, the government's decision to withdraw government-sponsored utility subsidies for the community influences an organisation's long-term profitability. The adjusted utility charges were expected to end in April 2019 but were still being applied during completion of this DBA research in 2019. Third, a lack of studies conducted on the region hindered measuring the total impact across the industry. In addition, poorly planned payment terms were often associated with certain cultural aspects that impact an organisation's cash flow. Similarly, with customers being less accountable for accepting risks, they shifted the risks down the supply chain. Fourth, Gulf nationals tend to form close relationships with family and citizens who share mutual religious and cultural beliefs. They perceive foreigners as outsiders who have the potential to influence society.

The following section (2.3) investigates the literature on discriminatory practices that hinder foreign-owned organisations benefitting from the government's financial and advisory support. It starts by discussing the impact of complex regulatory systems (2.3.1) faced by organisations operating in foreign countries, followed by the government's unethical practices and bureaucratic procedures (2.3.2) and (2.3.3), respectively. HR selection processes' importance in organisational development is discussed through (2.3.4), followed by the inequality between localisation and import systems (2.3.5). This is then followed by discussing complex customs procedures (2.3.6). This section ends by discussing biased trade mechanisms (2.3.7) and technology practices (2.3.8).

2.3. Discriminatory practices impact foreign-owned organisations (meso-economic conditions)

This section reviews specific examples of discriminatory practices with foreign-owned organisations from a global perspective. Except for two studies with female entrepreneurs

(Al-Ghazali, Yusoff, and Sadi, 2013) and business support schemes (Alrabeei and Kasi, 2014), finding similar studies from a Bahraini perspective was challenging. Also, a lack of sources from a GCC perspective on similar challenges required the researcher to investigate the problem from a global perspective. Furthermore, documenting the government's use of discriminatory practices was prohibited.

During the OECD global forum on international investment held in Paris, Von Moltke (2002) shows that the number of documented discriminatory cases involving foreign organisations is limited but do exist. Seeing 'Russia's business climate through the eyes of foreign firms', Ershova (2017) identified the following obstacles faced by foreign organisations operating in Russia. This data was gathered through a survey launched by the National Research University in Russia (NRUR) from April to June 2015.

2.3.1. Complex regulatory systems

Over 33% of the NRUR's survey respondents reported obstacles associated with registering a company, mainly in the construction industry. In Russia, obtaining building permits was a barrier, requiring an average of 540 days and 53 documents. This process was significantly higher compared to requirements imposed in other BRICS⁵ countries (Ershova, 2017). Other obstacles upon entering new and unfamiliar markets included complicated administrative procedures (Winch and Binachi, 2006; JETRO, 2015). According to Injaz (2013), the significant drawbacks were (1) the lack of transparency and bribes offered to obtain licences, and (2) funding favouring high-tech organisations rather than manufacturing.

2.3.2. Government's unethical practices

According to NRUR's survey respondents, 20% agreed that corruption in Russia is a major concern, 4% think it has worsened, over 33% felt corruption had remained at the same level, and 25% admitted that doing business in Russia was usually linked with

⁵ Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa

corruption. Informal payments made to regulatory bodies or officials cost 6–10% of total annual sales (Ershova, 2017). Due to their leadership and political influences, some organisations receive many privileges (i.e., tax holidays and access to credit facilities at nominal rates) not granted to foreign organisations (A'Ali, 2017).

2.3.3. Government's bureaucratic procedures

According to Cook and Nixon (2000), foreign organisations cannot secure subcontracted offers due to the poor-quality market infrastructure, placing them in weaker positions than larger organisations. Unethical competitive practices damage a country's investment climate (Ershova, 2017). Inconsistencies and shortcomings in the legislation lead to increased legal costs which further burden the investment budget. An additional hindrance includes inferior protection and contractual rights for foreign organisations (JETRO, 2015).

2.3.4. HR selection processes considering organisational development

According to NRUR's survey, 63% of respondents said recruiting experienced personnel, especially in the region, was a significant challenge facing foreign organisations operating in Russia (Ershova, 2017). Employing specialist English-speaking engineers, particularly in the far eastern region of Russia, was problematic. High turnover was also a problem (Terentyev, 2014). Furthermore, a survey conducted by JETRO in 2012/13 showed 46.8% of Japanese organisations operating in Russia encountered challenges hiring senior-level candidates. Other reported problems included (1) human resources' lack of capability and consciousness (46.8%), (2) human resources' poor language proficiency (30.8%), and (3) high executive-level turnover (30.8%) (JETRO, 2015).

2.3.5. The inequality between localisation and import systems

The JETRO (2015) survey reported that only 15-20% of Russia's domestic manufacturing organisations trust the quality of locally made spare parts, which poses a challenge for foreign organisations operating in Russia. Deterred from producing component parts locally, foreign organisations are compelled to either import their components or purchase

materials and have them assembled locally to abide by government rules. JETRO's (2015) survey further showed (1) 51.6% of respondents think that there is a rise in competition in terms of cost. 30.8% reported sluggish consumption, and for the non-manufacturing sector, attracting new customers was experienced by 40.8% respondents, compelling foreign organisations to reduce the product price (38.8%).

2.3.6. *Complex customs procedures*

The JETRO (2015) survey further showed that 79% of respondents said complex customs procedures was a significant challenge. 53.2% of respondents claim lack of notification and directives relating to regulatory contents posed challenges; 50% of respondents faced lengthy time frames during customs clearance, and this was applicable across both the manufacturing and non-manufacturing sectors.

2.3.7. *Biased trade mechanisms*

In a 2011 British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) survey conducted across 598 European organisations in China, 43% of respondents claimed they experienced biased treatment compared to 33% in 2010, and 46% of respondents predicted that discriminatory practices would continue over the next years, compared to 36% in 2010. The main accusation was violation of free trade pledges and favouring Chinese organisations over foreign organisations (BBC, 2011). Additionally, pricing directly impacts the costs of imported goods and machinery (Cook and Nixon, 2000). These offset any advantages gained through price liberalisation.

2.3.8. *Biased technology practices*

China's discriminatory technology licensing categories prevent foreign organisations and innovators from conducting business in China (The Economic Times, 2018). Denying foreign patent holders from using the technology once a licensing contract ends undermines the World Trade Organisation's (WTO) rules. Chinese policies and procedures also discriminate licensing requirements when transferring technology from a

foreign organisation to a Chinese organisation. These practices harm the intellectual property rights of foreign organisations and innovators, resulting in arbitration lawsuits.

2.3.9. Concluding remarks associated with discriminatory practices impact foreign-owned organisations (meso-economic conditions)

In summary, the literature showed that several obstacles associated with discriminatory practices impact foreign-owned organisations operating in foreign countries. First, registering a company at the initial stage was a significant obstacle, mainly relating to complex regulatory systems. Second, SMEs lack experience when handling regulatory steps compared to large organisations. Third, foreign organisations lack the influence and political connections often enjoyed by local organisations.

Similarly, the high demand for locally made goods and services limited the success of foreign organisations operating in new markets. Likewise, foreign organisations in foreign countries experienced recruiting challenges, mainly at the executive level. The high costs of human resources impeded foreign organisations from accessing capital and knowledge. Additional challenges included structural changes, a lack of demand for foreign goods, and having to follow complex customs procedures. The primary accusation was foreign governments favouring local organisations while violating free trade agreements. An additional finding was that biased technology practices towards foreign organisations operating in China undermined WTO rules.

The following section (2.4) identifies literature on organisational knowledge within the leadership (micro-economic conditions). An absence of a leader's knowledge in strategic planning in business strategies is discussed through (2.4.1), followed by the leader's lack of practical knowledge regarding external stakeholders (2.4.2). This section also discusses literature related to the leader's lack of knowledge regarding subject domain information on government activities (2.4.3).

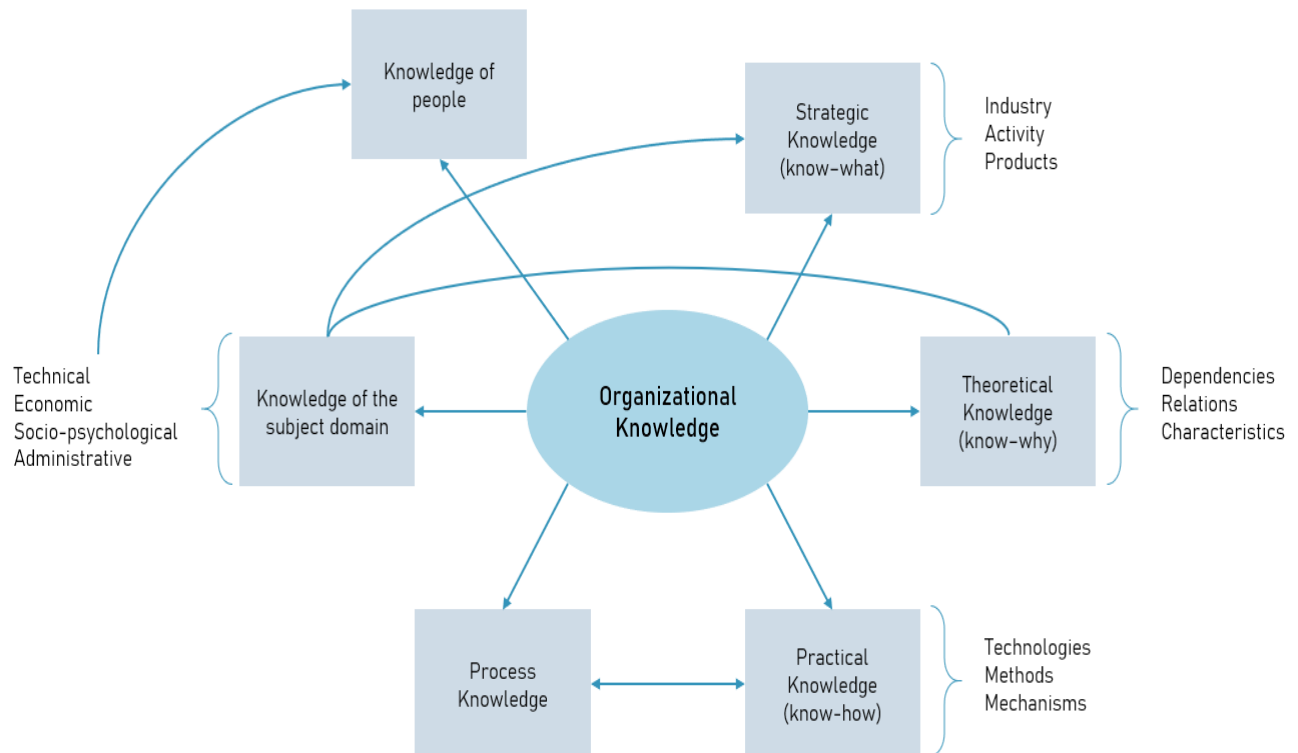
2.4. Identifying organisational knowledge within the leadership (micro-economic conditions)

As shown through (Figure 4) and (Figure 5), this section discusses the characteristics of two frameworks relating to organisational knowledge within an organisation. Grant and Azadeh (2014) say a theoretical framework is the floor plan of research that contains theoretical principles, concepts, constructs, and tenants of an idea. Before embarking on a research design, to show how the research problem was addressed from a theoretical context by understanding, analysing, and designing steps to investigate the problem, the researcher first considered the underlying principles of the inquiry. This helped to define the research approach (3.2) by providing a rationale on 'how' and 'why' this DBA research was conducted. This competency permits the researcher to move from merely explaining a phenomenon observed to identifying multiple aspects. Lastly, having a theory specifies the primary variables that influence the event of interest. Additionally, Trochim (2010) says that a specific theory may be embedded in a theoretical framework, and this competence extends the ability to validate an existing theory in an event or a challenge. However, researchers are not all expected to test a specific theory but can incorporate previously developed frameworks from which the research problem is derived by answering: (1) What is the research problem or research questions? (2) What is the approach to a feasible solution?

Organisational knowledge and its role in ensuring the competitiveness of the modern socio-economic systems framework shown in (Figure 4) identifies six knowledge categories: people, strategic, theoretical, practical, process and subject domain (Tumenova et al. 2018). This framework shows that a solution to a problem is connected not only with a timely adaptation to the changing environment but also implementing conditions to form and maintain a long-term competitive advantage. Additionally, the OECD competency framework as shown in (Figure 5) uncovers organisational knowledge within the organisation. This framework classifies jobs into families, where an organisation determines its capability to accomplish the highest impact and establish where those competencies are located. This framework also suggests that technical competencies are

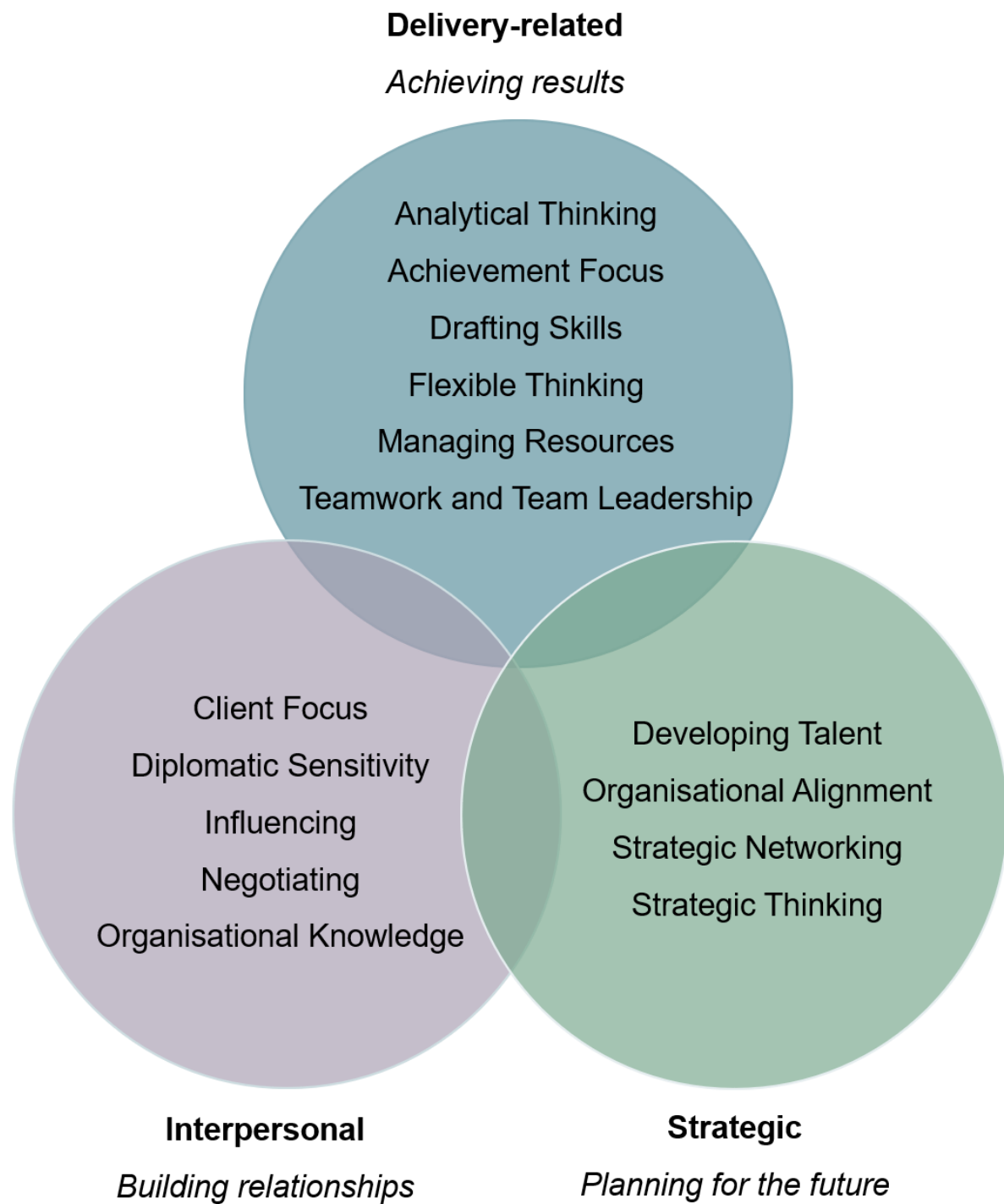
needed to perform a job within the job family and are referred to as fields of expertise knowledge within a work category. Apart from technical competencies, the core competencies collectively contribute to an organisation's success, but these vary with the job duties and requirements. (Figure 5) lists 15 core competencies grouped into three clusters. The blue cluster represents delivery-related competencies (Table 1). The purple cluster identifies interpersonal competencies (Table 2). The green cluster shows strategic competencies (Table 3). Competencies and behaviours expected at different levels reflect the variance in complexity, scope, and responsibility.

Figure 4: Organisational knowledge and its role in ensuring competitiveness of modern socio-economic systems framework



Source: Tumenova, Kandrokova, Makhosheva, Batov and Galachieva (2018, p.4)

Figure 5: OECD competency framework



Source: OECD (2014, p.4)

Table 1: Delivery-related competencies

S/No	Core Competency	Key Indicator	Particulars
1	Delivery related-achieving results	Analytical Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Is sought out by others for advice and solutions on how to best interpret and use information. √ Discerns the level of pressure or influence to apply in each aspect of the analysis in relation to the broader context.
2		Achievement Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Assesses group performance against goals and identifies areas for improvement. √ Translates business opportunities into concrete measures that are beneficial for the organisation. √ Dares to take calculated risks in order to let the business develop positively.
3		Drafting Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Handles creation of strategic written communication for the organisation. √ Reviews complex and/or sensitive work carried out identifying the impact for the organisation.
4		Flexible Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Is intellectually agile in response to challenges of internal and external environments. √ Solicits ideas and responds positively to those of staff, committees and the Secretary-General.
5		Managing Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Sets and redefines priorities and reorganises staff to increase the group's response capacity to internal and external demands. √ Evaluates the financial impact of decisions and develops strategies to address financial resource issues.
6		Teamwork and Team Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Makes team assignments within and outside of the Division/Directorate to facilitate horizontal work. √ Delegates authority to match responsibility, and holds staff accountable for agreed upon commitments. √ Appropriately involves others in decisions and plans that affect them. √ Promotes group morale and productivity by being clear about output expectations. √ Sees arising conflict and takes action at Division/ Directorate/Organisation level.

Source: OECD (2014, p.18)

Table 2: Interpersonal competencies

S/No	Core Competency	Key Indicator	Particulars
1	Interpersonal-building relationships	Client Focus	√ Builds client's confidence using own personal reputation in the international community and expertise.
			√ Knows when it is appropriate to push clients to consider difficult issues and acts accordingly.
			√ Determines strategic direction and long-term opportunities to best meet clients' evolving needs.
			√ Monitors, evaluates and, as needed, renews the client service model and service standards.
2		Diplomatic Sensitivity	√ Makes one's case tactfully, especially when dealing with the highest level of government officials.
			√ Knows when to stand firm and when to accommodate.
			√ Accurately hears and understands the unspoken thoughts or feelings of others and acts purposefully.
3		Influencing	√ Handles strategic communication issues for the organisation in highly-exposed situations.
			√ Handles difficult on-the-spot questions (e.g. from senior executives, public officials, interest groups, or the media).
			√ Anticipates and builds on others' reactions to keep momentum and support for an approach.
			√ Uses experts or other third parties to influence (e.g. takes multiple actions to make staged arguments, assembles political coalitions, builds "behind-the-scenes" support for ideas.
			√ Takes well thought-out impactful actions to win a point or reach an agreement.

S/No	Core Competency	Key Indicator	Particulars
4	Interpersonal-building relationships	Negotiating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Constructively works towards a win-win solution during negotiations. √ Explores creative solutions with others to overcome antagonism and to develop partnerships. √ Successfully leads negotiations with strong impact on one's unit. √ Demonstrates more than one preferred negotiating style (e.g. competing, cooperative, avoiding, compromise, accommodating) and adapts depending on the counterpart and context. √ Demonstrates an ability to step back when necessary from the negotiation process while staying focused on the objective.
5		Organisational Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ Uses knowledge of corporate politics to handle complex situations effectively and with discretion. √ Understands the nature and limits of related organisations and government agencies, and uses that knowledge to influence and lead. √ Takes ownership of compliance, ethical and other issues in order to protect the organisation's reputation and respect its obligations.

Source: OECD (2014, p.19)

Table 3: Strategic competencies

S/No	Core Competency	Key Indicator	Particulars
1	Strategic-planning for the future	Developing Talent	√ Delegates authority and responsibility with the capacity to do a task in one's own way and encourages others to take the lead and learn new skills.
			√ Promotes sharing of expertise and supports learning opportunities across the Division/Directorate/Organisation.
			√ Develops a common understanding and is transparent about staff potential to take over new responsibilities.
			√ Sets an example for staff development in the Division/Directorate/Organisation.
			√ Encourages others to develop their people through development dialogues and action plans.
2		Organisational Alignment	√ Uses a variety of means to communicate the organisation's needs and strategic directions.
			√ Develops a strategic direction for one's unit that connects the role of the team to the success of the organisation.
			√ Ensures the initiatives and priorities in one's area are integrated with one another and aligned with the strategic priorities of the broader organisation.
			√ Aligns people, processes and structures with strategic direction and organisational needs.
3		Strategic Networking	√ Manages relationships among key outside organisations and government entities to create long-range opportunities.
			√ Utilises established network of relationships to seek information of strategic importance and to seek a position of influence in key forums.
4		Strategic Thinking	√ Understands the position of the OECD in the larger world context; conveys a thorough understanding of the Organisation's/Directorate's/Division's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats; identifies competitive differentiators.
			√ Considers the bigger picture while setting priorities and the way forward.

Source: OECD (2014, p.20)

2.4.1. Absence of leader's knowledge in strategic planning in business strategies

Doz and Kosonen (2010) claim many organisations collapse under disruptive economic crises, and under such circumstances, the leadership feels trapped and neglects to revolutionise their business model. During a challenging external environment, a robust business strategy is important to an organisation's ability to cope. According to Blackburn, Hart and Wainwright (2013), planning is linked to growth after the start-up stage, and many business owners do not plan their organisation strategies unless required for financial reasons. (Table 4) shows three meta-competencies developed by Doz and Kosonen (2008) when it comes to the business model. This framework shows that increased strategic sensitivity and vision allows organisations to recognise opportunities to develop new business models and update existing models (Doz and Kosonen, 2010).

Similarly, during a new product or service launch, a written business plan improves decision-making. With this guide ready to lead, practical experience is advantageous for success (Burke, Fraser and Green, 2010). Delmar and Shane (2003) explain that following a business plan at initial stages may be advantageous because it enriches managerial capabilities to respond to the challenges. Bhide (2000) agrees that having a context-specific business plan is likely to produce a positive impact in stable economies but is less crucial in uncertain markets.

Table 4: Conceptualised strategic agility

S/No	Meta Capability	Description
1	Strategic sensitivity	The sharpness of perception of, and the intensity of awareness and attention to, strategic developments.
2	Leadership unity	The ability of the team to make bold, fast decisions, without being held down in top-level 'win-lose' politics.
3	Resources fluidity	The internal capability to reconfigure capabilities and redeploy resources rapidly.

Source: Doz and Kosonen (2008, p.2)

Additionally, planning a strategy is challenging, but implementing the strategy throughout the organisation is even more so (Hrebiniak, 2008). Farsight Leadership Organisation (2007) reports that 80% of organisations have the right strategies, yet only 14% implement them. Al-Ghamdi (1998) discovered that 75% of organisations lack effective coordination during implementing activities. According to Raps (2005), the actual success rate of strategy implementation is between 10-30%. This concludes that organisations have strategies, but many neglect to see the benefit of executing them. Leader anticipation and sharp foresight lead to deliberate reforms, maintaining the strategic advantage (Doz and Kosonen, 2010) and generating value creation alongside the organisation's business models. Leaders who have acquired experience by working in different working environments (Jabbar and Hussein, 2017) quickly identify and draw out a strategic plan for the organisation's benefit.

Giles (1991, pp.76-77) lists three key reasons of poor strategic planning. One challenge refers to the leader's focus on "a mixture of budgets and management wish list" rather than identifying crucial strategic areas. An additional problem was a lack of an executable strategy because the executors of the strategy lacked involvement and neglected to take ownership. Initially, managers relied on planning and organising strategies but faced significant obstacles executing these strategies due to poor leadership and reluctance to share knowledge (Čater and Pučko, 2010). (Table 5) shows an overview of significant obstacles towards successful strategy implementation.

Table 5: Overview of significant obstacles towards successful strategy implementation

Activity Group	Activities as operationalised in this DBA research	Relevant references
Strategy Formulation	Strategic analysis is not properly conducted	Pučko and Čater (2008)
	Strategy is poorly defined	Giles (1991); Hrebiniak (2005)
Change Management	Managers lack capabilities to implement change management	Hrebiniak (2005); Hrebiniak (2008)
Organisational Culture	Managers do not trust information generated outside their units	Hrebiniak (2005)
	Employees are reluctant to share knowledge with colleagues	Hrebiniak (2005)
	Short-range orientation dominates the company	Alexander (1985); Al-Ghamdi (1998)
Organisational Power Structure	Strategy conflicts with existing organisational power structure	Hrebiniak (2005); Hrebiniak (2006)
	Managers lack ideas how to persuade employees to execute the strategy	Hrebiniak (2005); Gurkov (2009)
	Top management is not actively engaged in strategy implementation	Hrebiniak (2005); Brenes, Mena and Molina (2008)
Leadership	Managers lack leadership skills for strategy implementation	Hrebiniak (2005)
	There are no guidelines or a model to guide strategy execution efforts	Al-Ghamdi (1998); Hrebiniak (2005); Kaplan and Norton (2006)
	Strategy is not properly communicated to lower levels	Hambrick and Cannella (1989); Hrebiniak (2005); Kaplan and Norton (2005)
	Reward systems do not stimulate strategy implementation	Terborg and Ungson (1985)

Source: Adapted from Čater and Pučko (2010, p.10)

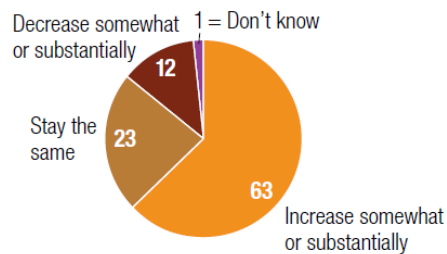
2.4.2. Leader's lack of practical knowledge regarding external stakeholders

A 2009 McKinsey and Company survey sent to 1,167 business leaders shows the government's role in an organisation (Figure 6). Additionally, (Figure 7) shows how government actions can impact an organisation's economic value, which is not limited to enforcing laws. Dua, Hail and Wilkins (2010) argue government actions will not be as effective as other actions but are more likely to work towards an organisation's finances. The same survey showed that government matters count most in developing countries (Figure 8).

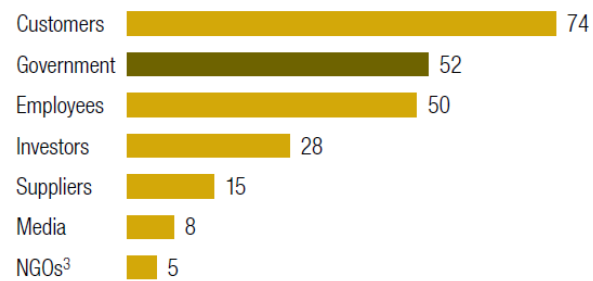
Figure 6: Government's role in an organisation

% of respondents, n = 1,167

How do you expect the government's involvement in your industry to change in the next 3–5 years?¹



Which stakeholders do you expect will have the greatest effect on your company's economic value in the next 3–5 years?²

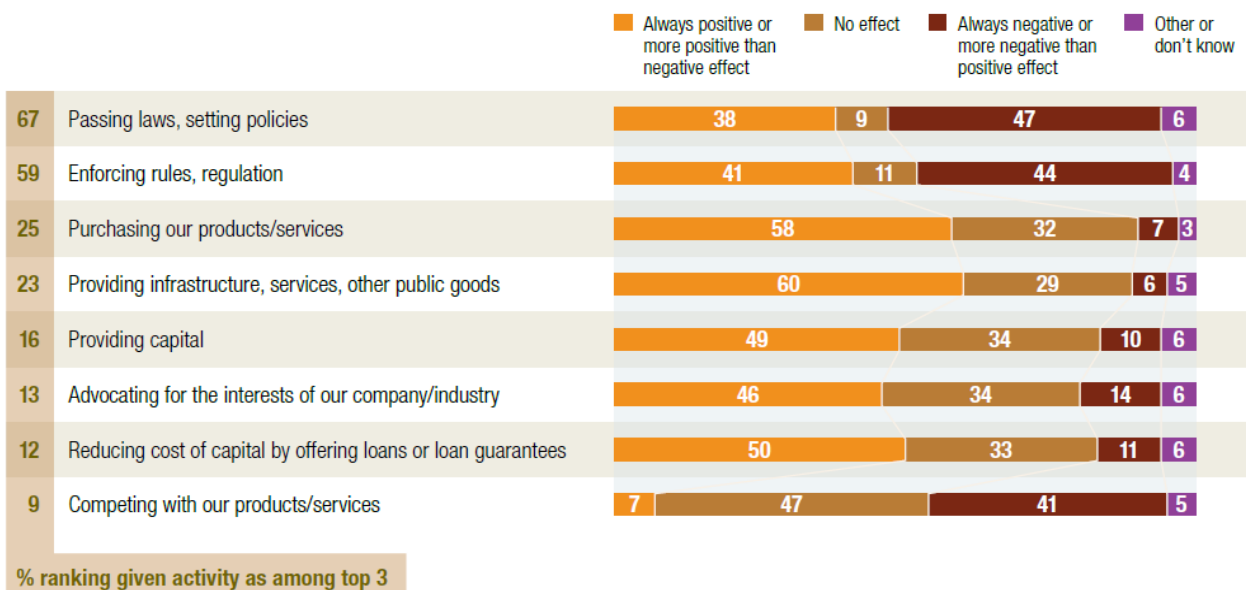


Source: Dua, Hail and Wilkins (2010, p.2)

Figure 7: Economic influence of government actions

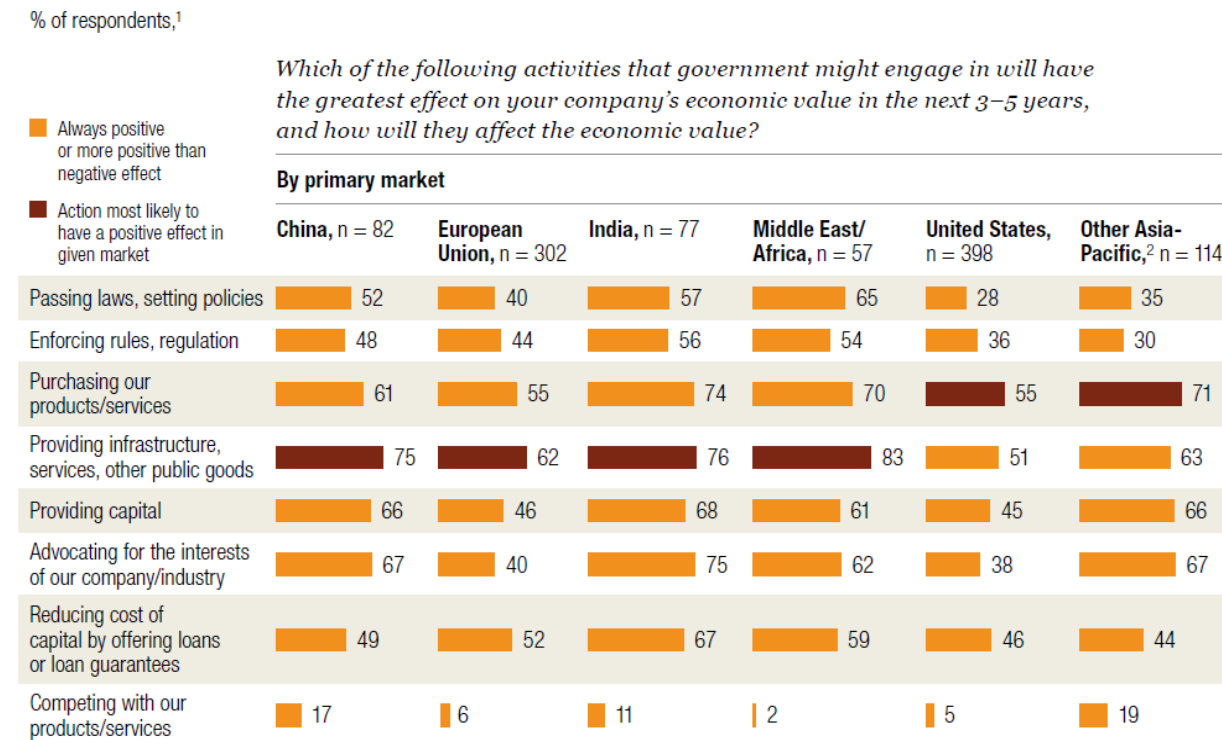
% of respondents, n = 1,167

Which activities that government might engage in will have the greatest effect on your company's economic value in the next 3–5 years, and how will they affect the economic value?¹



Source: Dua, Hail and Wilkins (2010, p.3)

Figure 8: Where government matters count most



Source: Dua, Hail and Wilkins (2010, p.4)

According to Blount (2015), the significant challenge facing business leaders is partnering with the local government where the business operates. To build a relationship with the government, an organisation should be aware of the government's decisions on regulatory costs, as well as trade and tax policies that impact their business. Instead of blaming the government for interfering, business leaders should strive to reap the government's benefits and incentives.

























The McKinsey and Company survey in 2009 also showed that an organisation's process in managing government relationships was less forceful when compared with other stakeholders. This survey showed that 34% of participants claimed 10% of their operating income was at stake. However, organisations mitigate some of the negativity with the government's help with infrastructure development and provision of capital. However, matters on setting policies and passing laws have created a negative impact on organisations' economic value (Dua, Heil and Wilkins, 2010). Increasing returns is the

leader's primary goal to execute that goal, leaders must regularly liaise with the government to seek support and advice (Reich, 2014).

2.4.3. Leader's lack of knowledge regarding subject domain information on government activities

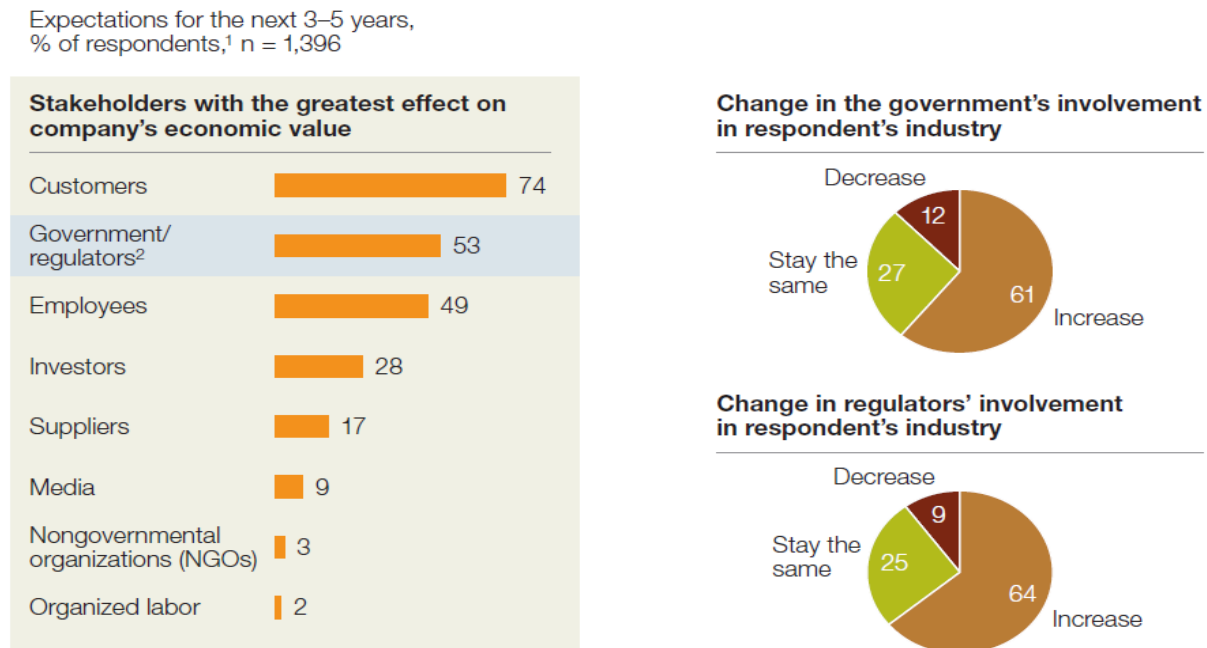
A 2011 McKinsey and Company survey sent to 1,396 business leaders as shown in (Figure 9) showed 53% of participants confirmed that the government played a significant role in organisations' value (Figure 10) while 64% of participants expected to see an increase in the government's involvement in their business. Executives from the financial, healthcare and energy sectors saw the government's involvement lower their operating income for the next 3-5 years, which helped their organisation's economic value (Figure 11) (Dua, Hail and Wilkins, 2011).

Figure 9: Income progress in emerging countries

	Increase	No effect	Decrease
Total, n = 1,396	 26	 15	 47
China, n = 70	 41	 4	 41
Latin America, n = 98	 39	 14	 36
India, n = 127	 37	 18	 34
Developing markets, ² n = 98	 28	 13	 43
Europe, n = 424	 23	 19	 47
North America, n = 411	 22	 14	 53
Asia-Pacific, n = 168	 20	 12	 50

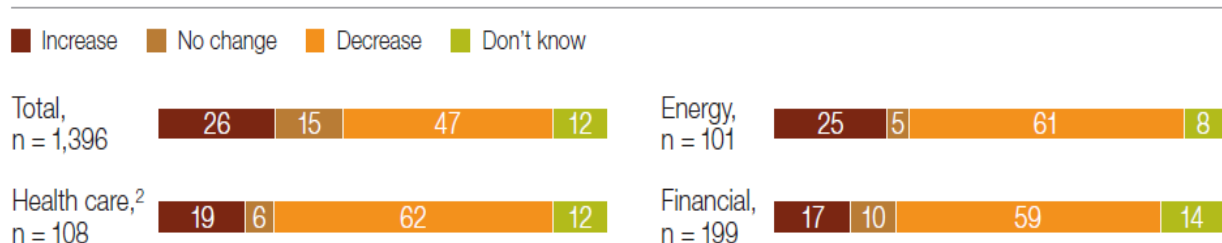
Source: Dua, Hail and Wilkins (2011, p.3)

Figure 10: Involving the government in the future



Source: Dua, Hail and Wilkins (2011, p.2)

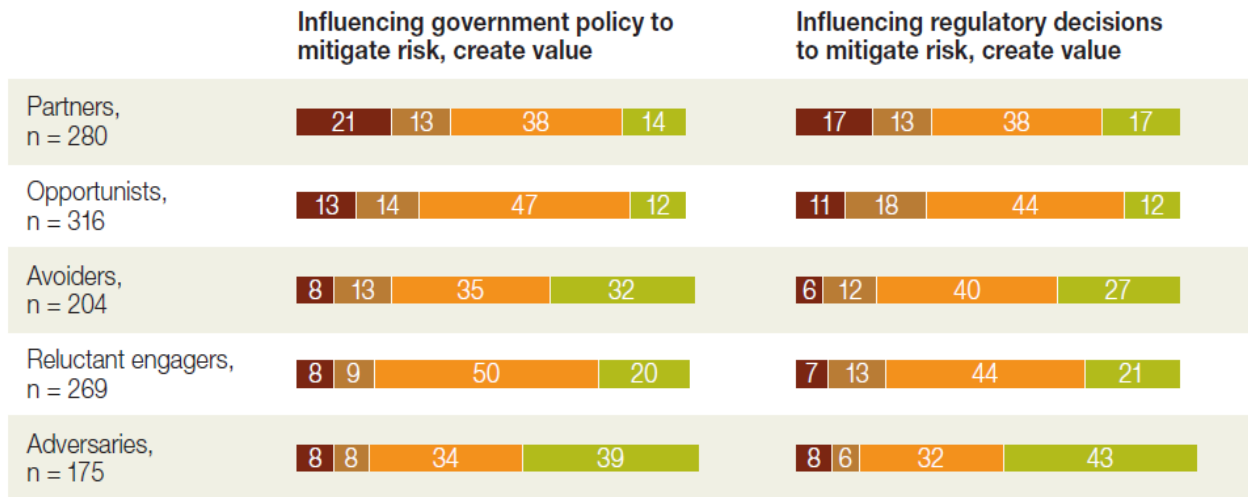
Figure 11: Projected influence of external affairs concerns on operating income



Source: Dua, Hail and Wilkins (2011, p.4)

The second survey sent to 1,396 business leaders defined five types of leaders: partners, opportunists, avoiders, reluctant engagers and adversaries. This survey showed that opportunists (25%) believe regulations and policy matters produce new business opportunities, whereas partners (23%) saw broader business gains along the line. Additionally, more than 50% of the participants were averse to the government's involvement in their business (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Success for partners and opportunities



Source: Dua, Hail and Wilkins (2011, p.6)

As shown through (Figure 6), the survey sent to 1,167 business leaders showed that new business leaders sought less information in unfamiliar markets while experienced leaders did not change the way they sought information. However, Cooper, Wolta and Woo (1995) said that highly confident business leaders were less active in seeking information. Additionally, Kirzner (1973) said that information seeking should be a continuous process even when the economy is stable.

2.4.4. Concluding remarks associated with identifying organisational knowledge within the leadership (micro-economic conditions)

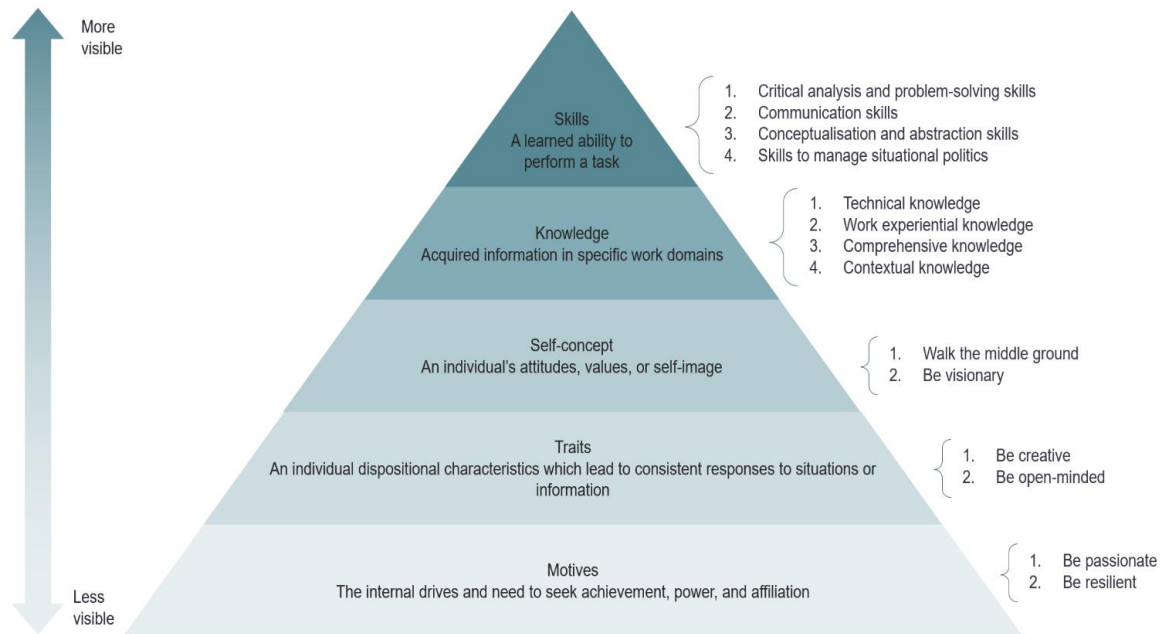
In summary, the literature showing the leader's absence of knowledge in strategic business planning revealed that business leaders with a strategic vision quickly identify and introduce suitable strategies to advance the organisation. Cross-functional leaders with their varied experiences quickly identify strategies to respond to an economic crisis. Additionally, corporate leaders must work cooperatively with the government and see the government's role as a benefit.

The following section (2.5) examines the leadership competencies and self-efficacies from a leader's perspective (micro-economic conditions) through relevant theoretical frameworks as shown through (Figure 13). The absence of leader competency skills dealing with external stakeholders is discussed through (2.5.1), followed by the absence of leader knowledge competencies dealing with employees (2.5.2). This section ends by discussing the absence of leader knowledge competencies dealing with employees (2.5.3).

2.5. Leadership competencies and self-efficacies from a leader's perspective (micro-economic conditions)

Competencies are "underlying characteristic[s] of an individual that [are] causally related to criterion-referenced effective and/or superior performance in a job or situation" (Spencer and Spencer 1993, p.9). The expected competencies by professional IT architects' framework as shown in (Figure 13) maps 14 competency characteristics and describes organisational knowledge as a set of skills, knowledge, self-concept, traits, and motives and lists 14 competency characteristics (Table 6). This framework shows that organisations must evaluate long-term competitive advantages before proposing a solution in an economic crisis.

Figure 13: Expected competencies by professional IT architects



Source: Spencer and Spencer (1993, p.8)

Table 6: Competency characteristics and expected competencies

S/No	Competency Characteristic	Description	Expected Competencies
1	Skills	Skills are the application of knowledge and know-how to perform a certain physical or mental task. Knowledge and skills are fundamentally different.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Critical analysis and problem solving skills 2. Communication skills 3. Conceptualisation and abstraction skills 4. Skills to manage situational politics
2	Knowledge	Knowledge is the body of facts, principles, practices and theories that form the basis for a given discipline. It is the acquired information in specific work domains.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Technical knowledge 2. Work experiential knowledge 3. Comprehensive knowledge 4. Contextual knowledge
3	Self-concept	Self-concept is how an individual positions him/herself. It is related to his/her values and self-concepts.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Walk the middle ground 2. Be visionary
4	Traits	Traits are an individual's dispositional characteristics, which lead to consistent responses to situations or information.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be creative 2. Be open-minded
5	Motives	Motives are psychological features that arouse a person to action toward a desired goal. These internal drives lead to the need to seek achievement, power and affiliation.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be passionate 2. Be resilient

Source: Adapted from Spencer and Spencer (1993, pp.8-9)

2.5.1. Absence of leader competency skills dealing with external stakeholders

Bird (1995, p.51) “maintains that entrepreneurial competencies are defined as underlying characteristics possessed by a person which result in new venture creation, survival,

and/or growth". Man, Lau and Chan (2002, p.124) identify these competencies as the "total ability of the entrepreneur to perform this role successfully." Likewise, Sarwoko et al. (2013) argue that robust entrepreneurial characteristics increase the entrepreneur's competency and improve business performance. Kiggundu (2002) outlines a combination of the leader's beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, personality, abilities, skills, and behaviour that contributes towards an organisation's success. Possessing all these characteristics does not guarantee the ability to successfully run a business. However, having one or more of these characteristics can predict the organisation's success (Westerberg, Singh and Hackner, 1997; Markman, 2007; Ahmad et al. 2010). (Table 7) shows entrepreneurial competencies compiled by Man (2001) and Chandler and Jansen (1992).

Table 7: Entrepreneurial competencies

S/No	Competency	Components
1	Strategy competency	Entrepreneur's ability to develop a vision and strategy, set goals, plan and sell ideas.
2	Commitment competency	Demonstrating the motivation to compete and complete a task.
3	Conceptual competency	Demonstrating cognitive ability and decision-making skills. Possess the ability to weigh risks, lateral thinking, be innovative, creative, reasoning and have the capacity to reduce risks.
4	Opportunity competency	The ability to recognise and capture an opportunity.
5	Relationship competency	Ability to demonstrate possession of interpersonal and communication skills. Ability to influence external stakeholders for support.
6	Organising competency	The ability to lead, coordinate, control, monitor and organise internal and external resources of the organisation.
7	Learning competency	Direct and utilise skills to recognise and adapt to the changing roles of the entrepreneur.
8	Personal competency	Personal qualities and abilities to build personal strength to enhance individual effectiveness to perform in a challenging situation. Ability to identify strengths and weaknesses and match them with opportunities and strengths.
9	Technical competency	The ability to use and adopt technical skills required for the business. This includes knowledge of instruments and machinery.
10	Social responsibility competency	Contribution of positive activities undertaken towards its customers, employees and the general public.
11	Familism competency	Display of affection and concern for the immediate family that plays an active role in the entrepreneur's daily life.
12	Ethical competency	The ability to understand and accept ethical problems and the capability to communicate and resolve them towards the benefit of the organisation.

Source: Adapted from Man (2001, pp.61-65); Chandler and Jansen (1992, pp.225-226)

Business leaders undertake three primary roles as entrepreneurial, managerial and functional (Chandler and Jansen, 1992). Therefore, small business owners must possess

a diverse range of skills across a mix of competencies to succeed. According to Sadler-Smith et al. (2003), they must perform a 'generalist role' without being a specialist. A study by the Productivity Commission of Australia showed that many SMEs in Australia collapse due to a lack of organisation and management skills (Bickerdyke, Lattimore and Madge, 2000). However, Osborne (1993) says leader competency plays a less critical role in an organisation's success. A shift in a business leader's personality underlying the business model and the ability to accumulate capital is significant. Additionally, business leaders must consider an organisation's external factors; a hospitable environment and knowledge of customer access to products or services are essential. Furthermore, business leaders should avoid head-on competition and entering highly competitive markets. Finally, business leaders should address fundamental challenges, such as the underlying economic conditions where the organisation operates, and avoid starting a business that suppresses the operating costs (Watson, Hogarth-Scott and Wilson, 1998).

While it is undeniable that external factors play an essential role in the organisation's development, it is internal factors related to planning and managerial skills that influence business success (Gaskill, Van Auken and Manning, 1993). Business leaders who have worked under uncertain and turbulent business environments react well in an economic crisis (Westerberg, Singh and Hackner, 1997). They have the invaluable knowledge and deep insight to combine and apply internal resources creatively to successfully move the business forward (Ahmad et al. 2010).

2.5.2. Absence of leader knowledge competencies dealing with employees

Gaining new knowledge is a vital ingredient for developing successful strategies. A level of knowledge cultivated within the entire organisation and with constant tweaks leads to incremental improvements (Weick and Quinn, 1999). This leads to a critical competence towards the organisation's success (Crawford and Nahmias, 2010). However, the problem occurs when managers undervalue the organisational, interpersonal, and individual views involved in the process. Organisations need leaders who can purposefully obtain knowledge from their workforce and reorganise accordingly (Bonner, 2000).



Thought leaders identify strategic visions and communicate the organisation's needs to support its values and future objectives (Debowski, 2006; Singh, 2008). If they only have a strategy and if it is poorly communicated, it will not generate the expected results in terms of creating engagement, commitment, and interest (Bertoldi et. al 2018). A well-articulated strategy explains the organisation's future and holds its workforce accountable towards a shared vision and growth (Schiemann, 1992). In the absence of clear objectives, it is impossible to drive the organisation toward a common vision (Oakland and Tanner, 2007). However, Macnamara, Amidon and Banff Executive Leadership Inc. (2010) say only 2% of a leader's time is spent planning the organisation's future.

Additionally, a vision alone will not drive the organisation towards success if its leader lacks the talent to drive the required change (Taylor, 1999). Once the vision has been agreed upon and communicated, its leader must have the capability to drive the change across the organisation (Singh, 2008). Moreover, the capacity to analyse the speed of change, whether high or low, along its direction is critical. Speed is the rate of change towards its external environment (Darwin, 1859). When an organisation changes quickly to meet the requirements of its external environment, it withstands the capability to be competitive. However, the organisation's risks being banished from the market when its leader has limited knowledge and cannot implement the required changes (Bertoldi et. al. 2018).

2.5.3. Absence of leader self-efficacy characteristics

Leader self-efficacy (LSE) is the leader's judgement to execute the necessary behaviours to effectively perform the leadership role (Murphy and Ensher, 1999). Flammer (2001) identifies LSE as the leader's capability to identify what areas lead to which goals and executing these goals within a personal capacity. This determines the leader's ability to set goals and guide the organisation toward success, ensuring that efficacy aligns with aims. (Table 8) shows LSE characteristics as self-confidence, accurate self-evaluation, willingness to take risks and sense of accomplishment (Bandura, 1977).

Table 8: LSE characteristics

 High Self-efficacy	 Low Self-efficacy
 Self confidence	 Fear of risks
 Accurate self-evaluation	 Fear of uncertainty
 Willingness to take risks	 Feelings of failure
 Sense of accomplishment	

Source: Bandura (1977, p.3)

A primary construct in social cognitive theory is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy highlights the intensity, initiation, behaviour, and persistence. This theory shows that business leaders high in self-efficacy undertake challenging tasks and exert efforts in completing them (Bandura 1977; Gist and Mitchell, 1992). These personalities are more persistent when encountering challenges. Paglis (2010) understands LSE as levers of change, working towards completing a task and achieving challenging objectives, showing the leader's strategic and creative leadership. Machida and Schaubroeck (2011) identified two key self-efficacy characteristics as: (a) development experience (challenges, feedback, and support) and (b) learning orientation. Likewise, McCauley and Van Velsor (2004) see self-efficacy as assessments, challenges, and support that contribute to a leader's development whereas assessment encourages business leaders to minimise gaps through the feedback received from the business circle. This feedback helps these leaders develop in two ways. First, good feedback allows business leaders with low self-efficacy to focus on self-doubts. Second, business leaders with high self-efficacy receive a warning signal to correct the style (Lindsley, Brass and Thomas, 1995).

2.5.4. Concluding remarks associated with leadership competencies and self-efficacies from a leader's perspective (micro-economic conditions)

In summary, the literature showed that for organisations to succeed, business leaders must possess a diverse range of skills and competencies. Since business leaders play three primary roles at entrepreneurial, managerial and functional levels, they must have the right skills to perform a 'generalist role'. However, a business leader having all these skills does not guarantee running a successful business, but possessing these characteristics help.

Additionally, managers who undermine the organisational and individual perspectives limit their ability to benefit and grow from the knowledge, whereas knowledge leaders communicate strategic visions to guide the organisation towards fulfilling its values and objectives. However, having a vision is not going to lead the organisation forward if its leader lacks the talent to drive the change across the organisation. Similarly, the literature also showed the importance of LSE characteristics to gauge the critical components regarding an organisation's sustainability. The absence of these characteristics hinders the leader's ability to work towards change when completing a task.

The following section (2.6) examines the importance of social networking, and (2.6.1) highlights characteristics of networking approach applicable to this DBA research.

2.6. The importance of social networking

At the outset Org. A's employees did not see the benefit of expanding their client base through networking. This section emphasises the importance of network-based literature to foretell the key learning of the findings. The findings indicate the challenge of conducting the needed critical reflection during what amounts to crisis conditions in the economic climate and confirm current thinking on the reliance of SMEs on their immediate network for strategic resources to resolve such situations.

Aldrich and Zimmer (1986, p.17) see networking as an approach that “views entrepreneurship as embedded in networks of continuing social relations.” Networks help business leaders develop and strengthen personal and professional relationships to gain access to capital investment (Bates, 1997; Slotte-Kock and Coviello, 2009). Similarly, Bruderl and Preisendorfer (1998) highlight the importance of networking for emotional support for entrepreneurial risk-taking. Additionally, Gimeno et al. (1997) views networking as essential to strengthen the organisation’s operations.

Freeman (1999) says that networking with professional services and venture capitalists is an excellent way to tap into vital talent and market information. However, Johannisson et al. (1994) say networking should be a continuous effort and should not be limited to the start-up stage. Human and Provan (1997) relate that a relationship built between businesses is more robust than between comparable businesses that neglect to network actively. Additionally, Lorenzoni and Lipparini (1999) say the quality of the resource flow is enhanced by trust, a critical element of a business network. Das and Teng (1998) see trust shared among business partners acting on each other’s benefit to reduce transaction costs under an economic crisis, particularly relating to highly complex tasks.

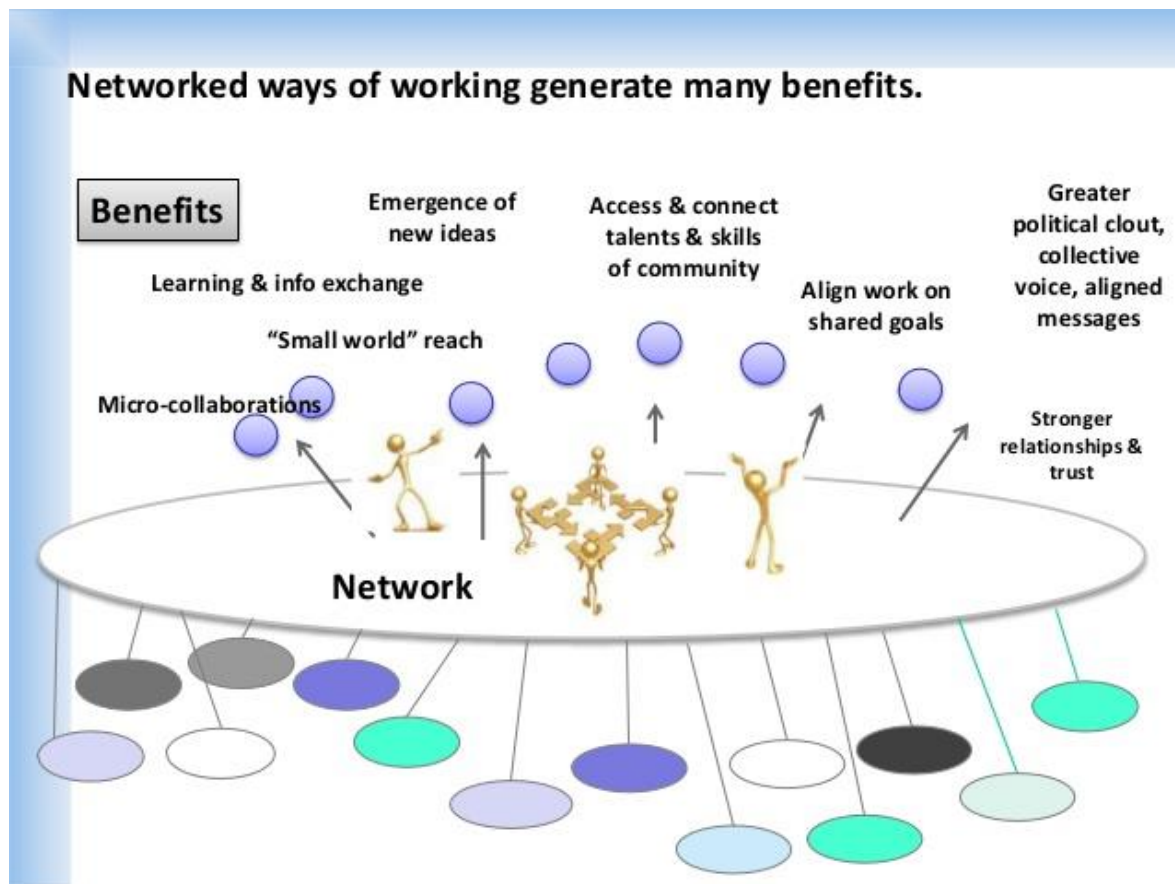
Similarly, Hoang and Antoncic (2003) say that network size and centrality step the volume and diversity of resources a business leader can access. Hansen and Witkowski (1995) agree that business leaders with previous networks beyond their comfort zone are likely to succeed in conducting business abroad. Interestingly, Singh et al. (1999) found that for business leaders that hail from the information technology sector with weak ties, networking helped them with better opportunities in the first 12 months. Additionally, Lechner, Dowling and Welppe (2006) argue that at the start-up stage, cooperative technology negatively impacts an organisation’s performance, showing that the business is not ready to develop opportunities. In contrast, the impact is positive for marketing information network sales. However, Zhao and Aram (1995) say that intense networking distinguishes high-growth from low-growth organisations. Aldrich and Reese (1993) argue that networking during the start-up stage has no impact on business performance.

Additionally, Uzzi (1996) recommends that a balanced network with strong and weak ties has a curvilinear relationship between the extent of the embedded relations within the broader network and an organisation's survival; very weak or robust networks are destructive. Bruderl and Preisendorfer (1998) say that solid ties received from family and friends positively impact business survival and sales growth. However, Starr and Macmillan (1990) see that strong ties are beneficial at the initial stage of a new business serving as low-cost and readily available critical resources. However, Aldrich, Rosen and Woodward (1987) highlight the fact that those young organisations less than three years of age benefitted from solid ties to generate profit. In contrast, Zhao and Aram (1995) saw a positive impact on gaining access to resources to grow the business. They saw no differences in resource diversity between the initial and later stages of growth. However, Lechner and Dowling (2003) say that organisations must strive hard to transform weak ties into strong ties even though they share differences of opinions and value propositions. Hite and Hesterly (2001) say that networks proceed through numerous changes, from being identity-based to calculative, and shifts from being dominant and socially embedded to arm's-length ties. As the organisation progresses, the initially cohesive network shifts from being sparse to loosely knitted and characterised by structural holes. The bottom line is that new businesses benefit from cohesive networks and networks that focus on structural holes, suggesting that one type of network caters at emergence and the other is appropriate for early growth.

Similarly, Bruderl and Preisendorfer (1998) explain the impact of solid ties on an organisation's financial and survival performance. Their study showed that strong ties could not stop entrepreneurial success. However, an organisation's survival depends on implementing the right action at the right time. Interestingly, Gimeno et al. (1997) say that family entrepreneurs who have been in business for an extended period of time benefit from the business circle for emotional support and are less likely to collapse. However, Hoang and Young (2000) report that entrepreneurs have benefitted from their network contacts at the initial stage as a key source of information or to gain the initial idea. Cooper, Folta and Woo (1995) suggest that management experience and age positively

correlate to personal ties at the initial stages of the business. Likewise, the business owner's education level also has a positive impact on seeking professional advice. Additionally, Hoang and Antoncic (2003) say that a business plan plays a critical role in building an extended network. Smeltzer, Van Hook and Hutt (1991) endorsed these thoughts and argued that business leaders with a robust business plan had more advisors than those without one. Those with a business plan at the inception of the business were able to acquire high-quality information. The close relationships increased the quantity of information but did not guarantee the quality data. However, Krackhardt (1990) says extracting information from the circle is determined by the accuracy of one's views and perceptions held on the network structure. Flisrand (2016) as shown through (Figure 14) demonstrates benefits of networking.

Figure 14: Benefits of networking



Source: (Flisrand, 2016, p.3)

2.6.1. Networking approach

An organisation is not an isolated entity but a connected network (Ritter, Wilkinson and Johnston, 2004). These networks are enhanced by organisational relationships and are precious resources for an organisation's development, especially those that do not have necessary resources, network contacts, and/or customers.

The aforementioned networking approach that was introduced in this section is summarised in (Table 9).

Table 9: SME behaviour and related theory

S/No	Theory	Year	Explanation
1	Networking approach	Ritter, Wilkinson and Johnston (2004)	This approach sees a business as a connected system that is strengthened by precious resources towards its development, and this approach is valuable for organisations that do not have the right resources, network contacts, and/or customers.

2.7. Chapter summary

This chapter began by showing a past economic crisis, the 'dot-com bubble' crash (2.1), and learned that organisations, instead of keeping with logic-based reasoning, were emotionally driven by hopes and speculations, similar to the pertaining economic crisis.

This was followed by discussing SME challenges within Bahrain's economic crisis (2.2). With a drop in oil prices, and the government's decision to stall new and large infrastructure projects and increased utility charges, this took a toll on the dependents' survival. (2.2.1) identified that with a drop in oil prices, an organisation's revenue could still grow, but as it did not correlate with a rise in oil prices, revenues begin to drop. The increased utility charges discussed through (2.2.2) showed excessive pressure on small and medium organisations. However, as the revised utility charges were new to Bahrain, and due to a lack of previous studies, measuring the impact it had on SMEs was not feasible. (2.2.3) identified late payments as part of the culture, shifting the financial burden from one party to the other, generating continuous cash flow challenges through the supply chain. This was followed by discussing personal and professional relationships

playing an influential role when conducting business transactions in the Middle East (2.2.4).

Section (2.3) discussed possible discriminatory practices from a global perspective, hindering foreign-owned organisations benefitting from local support. Complex regulatory systems was a primary concern (2.3.1). Likewise, the government's unethical practices were addressed through (2.3.2). Correspondingly, (2.3.3) discussed the government's bureaucratic procedures hindering foreign organisations from benefiting from new markets. Another primary concern was a lack of transparency in awarding government tenders, favouring local or large organisations compared to small organisations. Equally, as discussed through (2.3.4), finding the qualified employees in a foreign land was a primary concern for organisations operating in foreign countries.

An added challenge was high employee turnover at the executive level. An inequality between localisation and imports discussed through (2.3.5) showed that, despite the government's calls to increase local production, the protection given to local organisations prevented foreign organisations from localising production. Similarly, complex customs procedures with a lack of notification and directives, as discussed through (2.3.6), was a significant challenge. Biased trade mechanisms addressed through (2.3.7) showed that organisations were experiencing biased treatment in foreign countries, violating free-trade laws by favouring local organisations. Lastly, (2.3.8) discussed a country's biased technology practices, resulting in unfair treatment which hinders foreign organisations operating in foreign lands.

Section (2.4) discussed three key elements relating to organisational knowledge within the leadership. (2.4.1) showed the absence of a leader's strategic planning knowledge when it comes to the business model. Likewise, a lack of organisational knowledge within the leadership was identified in compiling the business plan. Similarly, (2.4.2) discussed the absence of leader practical knowledge as a primary challenge when dealing with the government and showed the importance of the government's role in how they manage

their relationships with the government. Lastly, (2.4.3) discussed the absence of the leader's knowledge missing subject domain knowledge on government activities and showed the importance of involving the government on its growth.

Section (2.5) discussed three leadership competencies and self-efficacies of a leader. (2.5.1) showed an absence of the leader's competency skills, hindering building a working relationship with external stakeholders. This inability hinders receiving the right guidance from its business circle. The absence of leader knowledge competencies due to a lack of leader knowledge competencies and overlooking recognising areas for improvement was discussed in (2.5.2). Lastly, (2.5.3) discussed the absence of leader self-efficacy characters and LSE judgments and recognised its levers of change and working towards completing them.

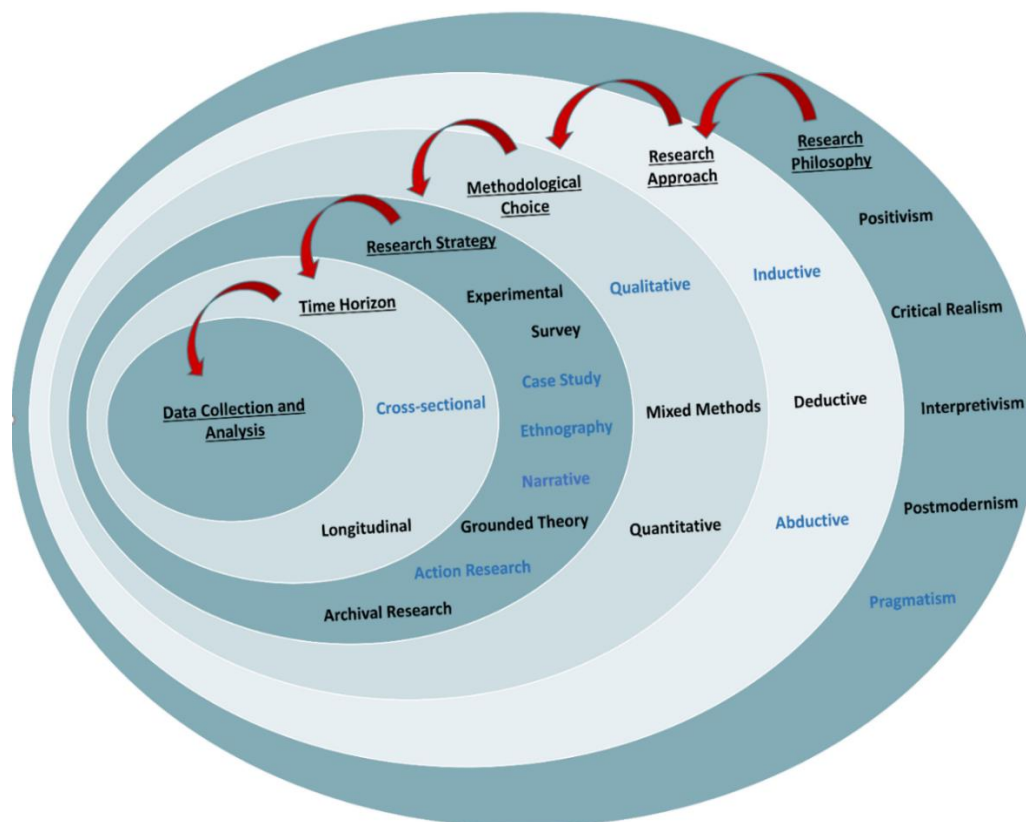
Section (2.6) discussed the importance of inter- and- internal-personal relationships and said that social networking should not be limited to gain access to intangible resources but to gain access to emotional support for entrepreneurial risk-taking. This was followed by demonstrating the appropriate approach applicable to this DBA research (2.6.1).

The next chapter addresses the theoretical underpinnings of the research methodology employed in this DBA research.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Underpinnings of the Research Methodology

This chapter addresses the research methodology employed in this DBA research. Towards uncovering the theoretical underpinnings of the research methodology to develop coordinated intervention strategies, this DBA research employed Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill's (2019) Research Onion model (Figure 15). This section first addressed the research philosophies (3.1), followed by the research approach (3.2). The next step (3.3) discussed the methodological choice and looked at the research strategy (3.4) with an overlook of AR cycles before discussing the time horizons (3.5). Data collection and analysis steps are discussed through (3.6), followed by data analysis process (3.7), and this chapter ends with the ethical considerations that were relevant to this DBA research (3.8).

Figure 15: Research Onion model



Source: Adapted from Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019, p.130)

3.1. Research philosophies

Ontology was the starting point relating to the nature of reality and its characteristics and saw the importance of seeing the reality through many views, enabling the researcher to report different views to build themes. Epistemology looked at ways of acquiring the best methods from the surroundings and recognised the importance of the researcher being an 'insider' and participant immersed in the actual crisis to build collaborative knowledge, as shown through (Table 10) (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014; Raelin, 2015). Action learning set participants held differing views depending on their status and past experiences, and was shaped by politics and resource availability (Knorr-Cetina and Mulkay, 1983). There was no single implication relating to epistemology that resonated with the objectives. The aim was to step the surroundings objectively, paying no attention to the boundaries that governed it (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2012).

Table 10: Philosophical assumptions with implications for practice

Assumption	Questions	Characteristics	Implications for practice (examples)
Ontological	What is the nature of reality?	Realities are multiple and are seen through many views.	Researcher reports different perspectives as themes develop in the findings.
Epistemological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * What counts as knowledge? * How are knowledge claims justified? * What is the relationship between the researcher and what is being researched? 	Subjective evidence from participants; researcher attempts to lessen distance between himself/herself and what is being researched.	Researcher relies on quotes as evidenced from participants; collaborates, spends time in the field with participants, and becomes an 'insider'.
Methodological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * What is the process of research? * What is the language of research? 	Researcher uses inductive logic, studies within its context, and uses an emerging design.	Researcher works with particulars (details) before generalisations, describes in detail the context of the study, and continually revises questions from field experience.

Source: Adapted from Creswell (2013, p. 21)

Interpretative frameworks as shown in (Table 11) helped to convey the relevant philosophical beliefs. The two governing principles that were associated with ontology and epistemology were pragmatism and social constructivism. Pragmatists are motivated by the researcher's values and questioning, which begin with a doubt that caused the problem and ends with a belief when the problem is solved (Elkjaer and Simpson, 2011). These researchers concentrate on practical results rather than abstract ideas and understand that there are various ways of understanding the problem. Pragmatists believe that one viewpoint does not explain the full picture and focus on conducting

research studies using methods that lead to reliable, well-researched and practical data (Kelemen and Rumens, 2008).

The next section (3.2) addresses the research approach adopted in this DBA research.

Table 11: Interpretative frameworks and associated philosophical beliefs

Interpretative Frameworks	Ontological beliefs (the nature of reality)	Epistemological beliefs (how reality is known)	Methodological beliefs (approach to inquiry)
Pragmatism	Reality is what is useful, practical and 'works'.	Reality is known through using many research tools that reflect both deductive (objective) and inductive (subjective) evidences.	The research process involves both quantitative and qualitative approaches to data collection and analysis.
Social constructivism	Multiple realities are constructed through our lived experiences and interactions with others.	Reality is co-constructed between the researcher and the researched and shaped by individual experiences.	More of a literary style writing is used. Use of an inductive method of emergent ideas (through consensus) obtained through methods such as interviewing, observing, and analysis of texts.

Source: Adapted from Denzin and Lincoln (2011, p. 26)

3.2. Research approaches

This DBA research adopted a combination of inductive and abductive approaches (Table 12). Inductive is moving from a specific observation to forming a general understanding. Additionally, arguments based on experiences or observations were conveyed inductively. "An inductive researcher works from the bottom-up, using the participants' views to build broader themes and generate a theory interconnecting the themes" (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007, p.23). Abduction began with a 'surprising fact', then worked out a plausible theory of how it occurred (Van Maanen, Sørensen and Mitchell, 2007; Gioia, Corley and Hamilton, 2013). Going back and forth between the data allowed participants to engage and form themes or abstracts that emerged from the process 'reason backwards' (abductive) (Suddaby, 2006). The two research approaches allowed the identification of known premises to generate untested (inductive) and testable (abductive) conclusions. Data collected helped to explore a phenomenon to identify themes and patterns that emerged from the process. This allowed location of these patterns in a conceptual framework (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019).

Table 12: Deduction, Induction and Abduction – from reason to research

Approach	Deduction	Induction	Abduction
Logic	In a deductive inference, when the premises are true, the conclusions must also be true.	In an inductive inference, known premises are used to generate untested conclusions.	In an abductive inference, known premises are used to generate testable conclusions.
Generalisability	Generalising from the general to the specific.	Generalising from the specific to the general.	Generalising from the interactions between the specific and the general.
Use of data	Data collection is used to evaluate propositions or hypotheses related to an existing theory.	Data collection is used to explore a phenomenon, identify themes and patterns and create a conceptual framework.	Data collection is used to explore a phenomenon, identify themes and patterns, locate these in a conceptual framework and test this through subsequent data collection and so forth.
Theory	Theory falsification or verification.	Theory generation and building.	Theory generation or modification; incorporating existing theory where appropriate, to build new theory or modify existing theory.

Source: Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019, p.153)

Selecting the most suitable methodological choice was indeed a challenge; however, the research philosophy (pragmatism) and the research approaches (inductive and abductive) applied in this DBA research helped decide a qualitative methodological choice over a quantitative.

The next section (3.3) justifies the methodological choice implied in this DBA research and what characteristics qualified to select this specific methodological choice.

3.3. Methodological choice

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) see the qualitative researcher as a ‘quiltmaker’ or ‘bricoleur’ who crafts and interweaves their interpretations skilfully to generate high-quality research. "The methodological bricoleur is adept at performing a large number of diverse tasks, ranging from interviewing to intensive self-reflection and introspection" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p.6). Additionally, Prasad (1993), Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2000), and Symon and Cassell (2004) say that qualitative research takes place within several different ontological and epistemological positions or “historical moments” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p.3) and means different things to different researchers.

Quantitative data is subjected to statistical procedures such as calculating the average or mean several times an event or behaviour occurs (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson,

2012). This happens because numbers are 'hard' data and are not interpreted and can give definitive or nearly definitive answers to different questions. A quantitative analysis is typically deductive, highly structured and contains large samples, and for a positivist, as an 'outsider' who would like a value-free way and collect data, a quantitative analysis is plausible (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009).

The methodological choices discussed in (3.1) recognised the importance of the researcher being an 'insider' and participant immersed in the actual crisis to build collaborative knowledge (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014; Raelin, 2015). The research philosophies discussed in (3.1) ontology and epistemology (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2012) recognised the value of flux of processes, experiences and practices and emphasis on practical solutions and outcomes (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). Also, the research approaches were a combination of inductive and abductive (3.2), whereas positivism is typically deductive and highly structured and focuses on large samples (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). By drawing on the qualities discussed in (3.1) and (3.2), it seemed a qualitative choice was more suitable for this DBA research.

The next section discusses the research strategies that were employed in this DBA research (3.4).

3.4. Research strategies

As shown through this section, this DBA research employed a combined research strategy, starting with AR (3.4.1) as an enquiry process incorporating a qualitative case study strategy (3.4.2), which helped in understanding the problem recognised to build awareness among external actors. This DBA research also addressed a sizeable area on culture and its components relating to business practices in Bahrain; therefore, it incorporated some parts of the ethnographic research (3.4.3) and ended with a narrative analysis (3.4.4).

3.4.1. Action Research

AR is an enquiry process to identify and solve an actual work problem (Shani et al. 2008; Adu, 2017) (Table 13). AR is a co-enquiry developed with people and not for them (Greenwood and Levin, 2007). It is a methodology of piloting research inside an organisation towards bringing value to both the organisation and the researcher (Züber-Skerrit and Perry, 2002). It is a collection of attempts by a group of people dedicated to planning, observing, reflecting, and executing a set of actions towards a change within an organisation. It is strictly participatory, uses democratic reforms, and is not revolutionary (Greenwood and Levin, 2007). Coghlan and Brannick (2014), as shown through (Figure 16), see AR as a cycle requiring different stages of constructing, planning action, taking action and evaluating action. This cycle is influential and challenges people to engage as participants to seek ideas, action, and outcomes and educates the changes introduced by change agents.

AR can be viewed from two angles: 'inquiry from the outside' and 'inquiry from the inside' (Evered and Louis, 1981). With 'inquiry from the inside', the researcher physically gathers knowledge by being immersed in the actual crisis, and 'inquiry from the outside' assessments are carried out externally. The intention was to collect new and continuous knowledge (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014), and it was observed that 'inquiry from the outside' was unsuitable, as being an insider, participant and immersed in the actual crisis (inquiry from the inside) was vital to collect information. This allows having face-to-face conversations with (6-15) people of mutual concern (co-operative inquiry) who can work as co-researchers. This shift in understanding from first to second person allows "going public" with the investigation and collaborating with others who have faced similar challenges (Kemmis, 2001, p.13).

Table 13: Evaluating AR

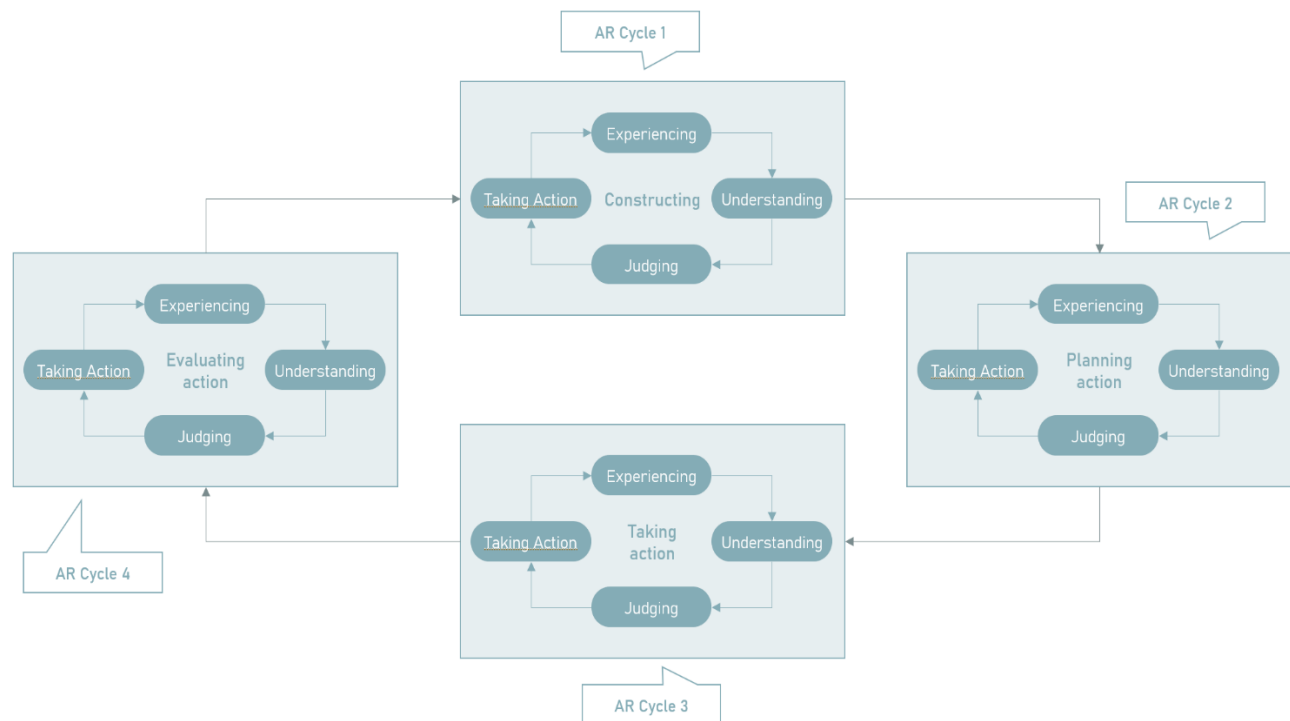
Description	Action Research (AR)
Definition	An AR is a systematic process of identifying a practical problem, collecting and analysing data to better understand the problem (<i>which may sometimes include implementing an initial intervention to see its effect</i>), and using the findings to develop an action plan to address the problem.
Purpose	The main purpose of conducting an AR is to address a practical problem (<i>which could be defined as an issue that a practitioner has directly or indirectly experienced as he/she was carrying out his/her professional duties</i>).
Focus	The focus could be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Understanding a problem * Implementing an intervention to see its impact in terms of addressing the practical problem identified.
Rationale	AR could be conducted with or without an intervention but it should always be based on practical problem.
Utilisation of findings	AR findings are used to develop an action plan to address a specific practical problem.
Level of stakeholder's involvement in utilising the findings	Stakeholders (<i>such as participants and those who are affected by or concern about the problem</i>) are less involved in the development of the action plan.
Ultimate goal	The ultimate goal is to address the practical problem identified so as to improve a professional practice.

Source: Adu (2017, p. 2)

The three AR characteristics are: *Action*, *Research* and *Participation*, and if any of the characteristics are missing, it leads to an imbalance (Greenwood and Levin, 2007).

- **Action:** AR can change the initial plan of an organisation to direct a more self-handling and sustainable level.
- **Research:** AR is an influential tool to generate new research information.
- **Participation:** researchers can facilitate and create new ideas and an AR agenda, bringing change to an organisation (actionable knowledge).

Figure 16: General empirical method in AR projects



Source: Coghlan and Brannick (2014, p.30)

Actionable knowledge

Adler and Shani (2001) define actionable knowledge as helpful knowledge to foster and develop executives as practitioner-researchers (Jarvis, 1999). Argyris (2003) says the quality of actionable knowledge is work based on continuous reflections. Züber-Skerritt and Perry (2002) define the difference between a 'core' AR project and a 'thesis' AR project; the core AR project focuses on research undertaken within an organisation where the manager-researcher works with its actors and with an expected outcome towards a successful change. In contrast, the latter comprises a doctoral inquiry into an organisational project, which may not result in successful terms defined by the core project. Coghlan (2006) says that a doctorate-level AR project focuses on developing theory through inquiry-in-action on the core project within the organisation. This means, while the researchers are engaged in the project or AR cycles, they need to diagnose, plan, take action and evaluate how the project is progressing and the learning they accumulate. To shape the consequent steps, the researchers need to continually inquire

into these four primary stages, reflecting how they are being conducted and if they are consistent with each other.

As Argyris (2003) argues, this inquiry into the cycles is central to developing actionable knowledge. This learning process of the AR cycles is different from everyday problem-solving. Coghlan and Brannick (2005) say learning about learning (meta-learning) brings quality into AR. The knowledge that emerges can be actionable, bringing value to the academic and practitioners. Coghlan (2006) says first-, second- and third-person inquiry and practice give 'insider' AR doctorates their integrity. Levin (2003) states that what is most important in an AR is not adhering to rigour-relevance polarity but focusing on robust arguments related to participation, actual problems, jointly built understanding and workable solutions. The knowledge and practice that is created comes from research in action (third person), which is embedded in the individual practitioner-researchers learning in action (first person) and collaborative (second person).

Nevertheless, AR has been criticised for its recommendations being limited to a specific context, but due to its qualitative nature, AR is easily prone to bias yet hard to replicate (Harrell and Bradley, 2009) and neglects to build a theory from a particular intervention that can be easily applied (Cairns, Harris and Carroll, 2008). However, this was not what was expected of AR as a methodological strategy in this DBA research; rather the aim was to create actionable contextual knowledge that can directly benefit Org. A and not generalised knowledge. Greenwood and Levin (2007) say an AR approach should be robust enough to link action, theory, and knowledge to improve existing conditions. The adjoining sections show how this knowledge was built.

➤ **AR Cycle 1 (constructing):** first-person AR and the researcher multiple roles in the research process

The journey began with an observation leading to an inquiring approach to see "what was really going on?" and what can be done to change and improve the situation (Torbert, 2004). Frequent discussions and media news on the drop in oil prices leading to an economic crisis were observed in June 2014. Matters relating to the ongoing economic

crisis were heard at several networking events, and the business circle was concerned about the government's decisions to stall large and new infrastructure projects and how these decisions have impacted their organisation's survival and sustainability (assess outer world influences). The business circle was concerned with the government's decision to withdraw government-sponsored utility subsidies for the community. There were constant discussions on matters relating to obtaining or having obtained Tamkeen's support to survive and sustain in this economic crisis. An additional observation was that Org. A's customer base was government or semi-government offices and its primary income derived from government projects. However, the government's decision to stall large and new infrastructure projects worth over US\$350–400 million contributed to Org. A's 75% profit loss. Org. A also presumed the government favours locally owned organisations over foreign-owned organisations, and this perception hindered it from seeking Tamkeen's support.

- **AR Cycle 2 (planning action):** second-person AR to uncover unseen roots below wrong traits

The next attempt was to have a jointly built understanding with Org. A as to why it was losing revenues, and consequently, the findings are to be resolved through a behavioural change with those to whom the problem relates within the organisation (AR cycle 3) (7.3.3). AR cycle (2) (7.3.2) comprised an overall plan and a decision relating to the first step to execute. Actions involved taking the first step, followed by fact-gathering to evaluate the first step. This was to analyse what was learned and create a foundation to address the next step, ensuring that there was a continuing “spiral of steps, each of which is composed of a circle of planning, action and fact-finding about the result of the action” (Lewin, 1946, p. 146).

- **AR Cycle 3 (taking action):** third-person AR to build up organisational knowledge to avoid following wrong traits in the future

Based on the learnings from AR cycles, (2) and (3) addressed the need to impose jointly agreed strategies within Org. A and to resolve the situation together with whom the problem relates within Org. A from two aspects: 1) evaluating ways to ‘scale up’ small-

scale inquiry at the organisational level and 2) to inquire whether AR can add value to address significant challenges (Kemmis, 2001).

➤ **AR Cycle 4 (evaluating action):**

Time limitation was a constraint with AR cycle (4) given the implementation of actionable cycles generated within Org. A and to measure people's practices and engage in the continual adaptation of new knowledge. This is a limitation of AR as a methodological choice.

However, before settling on AR as the most suitable research strategy applicable for this DBA research, other research strategies were evaluated. The objective was not to create a theory; the grounded theory was therefore considered unsuitable. Phenomenological research relates to inquiries of philosophy and psychology, with the researcher assessing individuals' experiences concerning an event or 'phenomenon'. The purpose was to collect data by the researcher, ensuring transparency, correctness, quality, and the participants' confidentiality (interpretivism) and not through archived data. In the observation method, the researcher gathers data on a subject (i.e., through a questionnaire/survey) or a behavioural checklist (i.e., through observation) and may involve site visits or open-ended interviews without specific questions. The data is then interpreted for statistical results for emerging patterns. However, it was decided not to use the questionnaire; even though this instrument can reach a larger group of people, a semi-structured questionnaire split into three major areas (introductory, linking, and key questions) was used (Appendix B). After evaluating other approaches over AR, it was observed that other approaches were either unsuitable or less suitable for this DBA research.

3.4.2. Case study

To build awareness among external actors, the case study strategy helped in building the problem. Woodside (2010) sees Case Study as a powerful research strategy to understand, suggest or supervise individual actions to improve practice, which was the fundamental requirement of this DBA research. In addressing a complex and messy

problem that did not broadly explore its complexity, Gummesson's (2008) case study was practical.

3.4.3. *Ethnography*

This DBA research addressed a considerable area on culture and its components relating to business practices in Bahrain; therefore, some parts of the ethnographic research were incorporated as well. Agar (1980) says ethnography is a qualitative research strategy which interprets and describes behaviours, beliefs, languages, values, and patterns of values among a culture-sharing group. Similarly, Fetterman (2010) argues in ethnography, the researcher acknowledges regularities, rituals and customary social behaviours, ideas or beliefs conveyed through material or language.

3.4.4. *Narrative analysis*

This DBA research addressed inquiries from humans (narrative analysis), and the researcher looked for individual stories (Riessman, 2008). These stories were then reproduced into a narrative order and combined with the individual's story with the researcher's opinions and views to create a joint statement (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000).

By employing combined research strategies as discussed in (3.4.1), the importance of AR as a methodological strategy of piloting research inside an organisation was identified by exploring its benefits over other research strategies. This was followed by discussing the case study strategy (3.4.2) to understand the problem well and how it helped to understand, suggest or supervise individual actions to improve practice. The next step addressed a considerable area on culture and its components relating to business practices in Bahrain and saw the benefit of ethnography to interpret and describe cultural aspects of the participants (3.4.3). Lastly, a narrative analysis (3.4.4) helped to reproduce the participants' and the researcher's stories into a readable format to create a joint statement.

The next step (3.5) address time horizons applied in this DBA research, followed by the detailed data collection steps applied in this DBA research (3.6).

3.5. Time horizons

Time horizons, longitudinal (repetitive over an extended timeframe) and cross-sectional (limited to a specific timeframe) are imperative for the research design irrespective of the research methodology (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). This DBA research was limited to a particular time frame and therefore the cross-sectional time horizon was applied.

3.6. Data collection

(Figure 17) and (Table 14) shows the coordinated intervention strategies of the stakeholder engagement process to depict a clearer roadmap on how the data was collected. The timeframe of the stakeholders approached and the knowledge it contributed and where the knowledge is documented is shown in (Figure 17). As shown through this section, the interview protocols are addressed through (3.6.1) followed by the discussion points (3.6.2) that helped facilitate the conversations. The initial informal discussions with Org. A are addressed through (3.6.3) and the progress of meetings with other stakeholders is addressed through (3.6.4).

3.6.1. Interview protocols

Creswell (2013) says that once a researcher decides on an action learning set and sites, there should be more than one source to collect data and protocols to record the information, as shown in (Table 15). This must be done bearing in mind possible field issues (lack of data, the need to leave the site early, or loss of information) associated with data collection. This includes data storing, retrieving and protecting from possible damage or loss. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) advise using an interview guide, a four- to five-page form with approximately five to seven open-ended questions with ample space to write responses to note the participants' comments (Appendix B).

Figure 17: Data collection and stakeholder engagement process

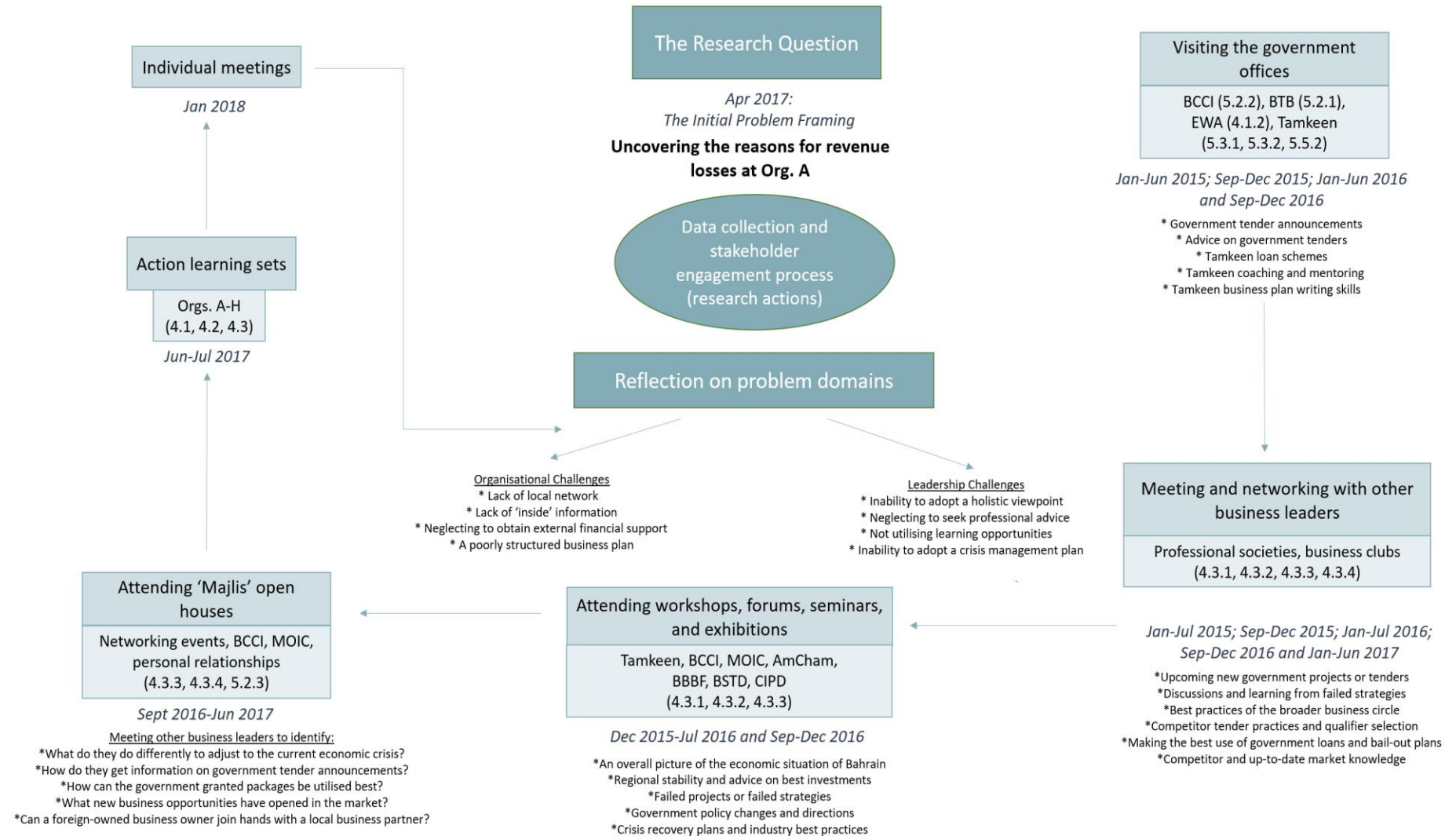


Table 14: Data collection road map

S/No	Timeframe	Data collection step	Actions taken	Remarks
1	June-2014	Initial informal discussions with Org. A	The initial informal meetings helped to explore concept-context rich data about the existing challenging economic crisis.	
2	Jan-Jun-2015 Sep-Dec-2015 Jan-Jun-2016 Sep-Dec-2016	Visiting the government offices	Visiting the government offices helped in identifying: *Government tender announcements and allocations are public and are through the tender board. *Tamkeen provides loans for starting up and small and medium organisations. *Tamkeen provides coaching and mentoring for all the organisations at differing maturity levels. *As part of its coaching services, Tamkeen also advise on business plan writing skills.	In parallel
3	Jan-Jul-2015 Sep-Dec-2015 Jan-Jul-2016 Sep-Dec-2016 Jan-Jun-2017	Meeting and networking with other business leaders	Meeting a vast network of other business leaders helped in identifying how these leaders have embraced the economic crisis and what they do curtail the situation. These meetings helped to unveil how these business leaders were informed of: *Upcoming new government projects or tenders *Discussions and learning from failed strategies *Best practices of the broader business circle *Competitor tender practices and qualifier selection *Making the best use of government loans and bail-out plans *Competitor and up-to-date market knowledge	
4	Dec-2015-Jul-2016 Sep-Dec-2016	Attending workshops, forums, seminars and exhibitions	Attending these events helped in uncovering: *An overall picture of the economic situation of Bahrain *Regional stability and advice on best investments *Failed projects or failed strategies *Government policy changes and directions *Crisis recovery plans and industry best practices	
5	Sep-2016-Jun-2017	Attending 'Majlis' open houses	Meeting other business leaders helped in identifying: *What do they do differently to adjust to the current economic crisis? *How do they get information on government tender announcements? *How can the government granted packages be utilised best? *What new business opportunities have opened in the market? *Can a foreign-owned business owner join hands with a local business partner?	
6	April-2017	The initial problem framing	What was found out by meeting multiple stakeholders? Was it one or a collection of stakeholders? Who were the direct contributors towards the challenge; was it Org. A as a whole or a collection of organisations? Was it a problem within Org. A on or an external contribution that has a direct impact on it? Were there any indirect influences that played a significant role in Org. A's revenue losses? What was found out by meeting external stakeholders spanning over two years? How can I start addressing my enquiry process? I was overwhelmed with more questions than answers, but I must find a way to address the main research question.	
7	Jun-Jul-2017	Action learning sets	Meeting seven comparable, independent and diversified SMEs that have been impacted by the drop in oil prices to see what these organisations did better, worse, or different than to Org. A to survive in this economic crisis.	
8	Sep-Dec-2017	Data analysis and key findings	Summarising the key findings from the initial meeting with the action learning sets.	
9	Jan-2018	Individual meetings with the action learning sets	To follow up on what was not covered at the initial action learning sets.	
10	Jan-2018 and continued	Research outcome/nutshell pitch	Writing up began.	

Table 15: Data collection activities by five strategies

Data collection activity	Case study	Ethnography	Narrative
What is traditionally studied? (sites or individuals)	A bounded system, such as a process, an activity, an event, a programme or multiple individuals	Members of a culture-sharing group or individuals representative of the group	Single individual, accessible and distinctive
What are typical access and rapport issues?	Gaining access through the gatekeeper, gaining the confidence of participants	Gaining access through the gatekeeper, gaining the confidence of informants	Gaining permission from individuals, obtaining access to information and archives
How does one select a site or individuals to study? (purposeful sampling strategies)	Finding a 'case' or 'cases', atypical case, or a 'maximum variation' or 'extreme' case	Finding a cultural group to which one is a 'stranger' a 'representative' sample	Several strategies, depending on the person (i.e. convenient politically important, typical, a critical case)
What type of information typically is collected? (forms of data)	Extensive forms, such as documents and records, interviews, observation, and physical artifacts for 1 to 4 cases	Participant observations, interviews, artifacts, and documents of a single culture-sharing group	Documents and archival material, open-ended interviews, subject journaling, participant observation, casual chatting; typically a single individual
How is information recorded?	Field notes, interview and observational protocols	Field notes, interview and observational protocols	Notes, interview protocol
What are common data collection issues?	Interviewing and observing issues	Field issues (i.e. reflexivity, reactivity, reciprocity, 'going native', divulging private information, deception)	Access to materials, authenticity of account of materials
How is information typically stored?	Field notes, transcriptions, computer files	Field notes, transcriptions, computer files	File folders, computer files

Source: Adopted from Creswell (2013, pp.148-149)

3.6.2. Discussion points

The seven discussion points as shown in (Table 16) and other business leaders helped to reflect on government actors who can help shape and respond to some of the doubts (macro-economic conditions). Visiting government offices, having meetings and networking with other business leaders, and attending 'Majlis' open houses and workshops, forums, seminars, and exhibitions were in parallel. Meeting seven comparable, independent, and diversified SMEs and Org. A helped to understand what these organisations did better, worse, or different than Org. A. However, while engaging with the action learning set, visits to the government offices and meeting other business leaders were continuous and in parallel. Key findings and data analysis began in January 2018 soon after the initial action learning set findings to follow up on unclear areas. Meetings and networking events as discussed through (Figure 17) and (Table 14) further strengthened the discussion points. Also, experience working as a commercial manager

and now as an SME consultant were of significant help to build discussion points. Similarly, the literature review and media news further tweaked the discussion points.

The discussion points mapped to the semi-structured questionnaire (Appendix B) helped facilitate the action learning set. These discussion points helped to shape AR cycles shown in (Figure 16). A specific discussion point addressed a particular research question which was later improved, reframed, or added during the discussions, allowing the action learning set participants to argue or rearrange research questions. Additionally, some answers related to question (1) arose when discussing research question (2); sometimes, some fit both the questions fully and partially. The primary aim was to collect as much data as possible, which was later read and analysed to fit the research questions.

Table 16: Discussion points

Discussion point	Particulars	Relevance to the research question
1	The organisational journey	The ice breaker
2	Drop in oil prices contributing to an organisation's sales and profit losses	Research question (1)
3	The significant challenges to SMEs' survival: are there only economic and financial consequences or were there other challenges as well?	Research question (3)
4	SME remedial measures towards survival and sustainability	Research questions (1) and (2)
5	The funding sources towards SME's survival and sustainability	Research question (2)
6	How were SMEs managing to retain and motivate employees in this economic crisis?	Research question (2)
7	Going forward and closing comments: SME's perception on the drop in oil prices-will it remain longer and leave behind further challenging economic footprints or reach an acceptable level?	Closing question

3.6.3. Initial informal discussion with Org. A

The initial informal discussion started in June 2014, and as discussed in (1.2), it was observed that Org. A's revenue losses coincided with the drop in oil prices. Org. A's participants (Table 17) were from different departments and were not compensated. Every participant attended at least one session. These initial meetings helped to explore concept-context data about the challenging environment. Apart from the action learning set and individual meetings, these initial mini-meetings (about 1 hour) helped to explore pre-designed discussion points (Table 16). Org. A's participants devoted approximately 100 hours [2 hours x 2 meetings (4 hours) + individual meetings (51.5 hours)], allowing a total of 55.5 hours. In addition to face-to-face meetings, an additional 20 hours and initial informal conversations (25 hours) were spent on coordination and follow-up activities.

Table 17: Org. A's team involvement

Org. A	Number of meetings	Total number of hrs	Facilitator	Participant	Novice or experienced
CEO	8	20	Researcher	Ravi	Experienced
Finance	4	10	Researcher	Abbas	Novice
				Adullah	Novice
				Sandhu	Novice
Operations	7	10	Researcher	Adel	Novice
				Ahlam	Novice
				Ahmed	Novice
				Shereen	Novice
Projects	4	8	Researcher	Ali	Novice
				Amal	Novice
				Lina	Novice
Quality assurance	2	3.5	Researcher	Amarul	Novice
				Amina	Novice
				Ammad	Novice
Total hours	25	51.5			

3.6.4. Meeting other stakeholders

The next step was to involve other stakeholders, as shown through (Table 18), in acquiring information to strengthen the final recommendations. These visits were in parallel and required several other data collection and selection methods. Patton (2002) identifies three qualitative interview methods: (a) the interview guide method; (b) the informal conversational interview (unstructured interviewing); and (c) the standardised open-ended interview (structured interviews).

Table 18: Government offices visited

S/No	Government office	Findings
1	Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI)	Government tender notifications can be obtained through the BCCI's website or by visiting their office in person.
2	Bahrain Tender Board (BTB)	Government tender announcements and allocations are public and can be obtained through the BTB's website or visiting their office in person.
3	Electricity and Water Authority (EWA)	The increased utility charges apply to both locally and foreign-owned organisations. The increase is only for expat households and not on their organisations, and the impact is more on water than on electricity.
4	Tamkeen	Tamkeen provides loans to all the SMEs irrespective of the organisation's ownership and size. Tamkeen also provides coaching and mentoring support for all the organisations at differing maturity levels.

Visiting the government offices

By visiting the government offices between January and June 2015, September and December 2015, January and June 2016, and September and December 2016, this helped the collection of information on what support these offices were extending to SMEs. The appointments were scheduled monthly and at the convenience of the employee's availability. However, there were no meetings scheduled in July and August due to summer vacations (low headcount) and during the holy month of 'Ramadan'⁶ (shortened working hours). There were 20 scheduled visits to government offices; the highest number was to Tamkeen, and the lowest to EWA.

⁶ The ninth month of the Islamic calendar, observed by Muslims as a month of fasting, prayer, reflection, and community.

Meeting and networking with other business leaders

Attending networking events, informal gatherings, and customer visits from January to July 2015, September to December 2015, January to July 2016, September to December 2016, and January to June 2017 were useful to see what other business leaders do and helped understand what these organisations did better, worse, or different compared to Org. A. These meetings also helped to establish how these business leaders were informed of upcoming government projects or tenders, discussions and learning from failed strategies, best practices of the broader business circle, competitor tender practices and qualifier selection, making the best use of government loans and bail-out plans and up-to-date competitor and market knowledge. These were monthly networking events and there was no need to schedule prior meetings. However, there were no visits in August.

Attending workshops, forums, seminars, and exhibitions

Attending workshops, forums, seminars, and exhibitions ran in parallel to visiting government offices and meeting and networking with other business leaders. These visits helped to form an overall picture of the economic situation of Bahrain and regional stability and advice on best investments. These visits were also helpful to learn from failed projects or failed strategies and the government's policy changes and directions. These meetings provided a vast opportunity to learn crisis recovery plans and industry best practices. These were one-day events that took place between December 2015 and July 2016 and September and December 2016, and there were no meetings in July and August (the warmest months).

Attending 'Majlis' open houses









Attending 'Majlis' open houses between September 2016 and June 2017 and meeting other business leaders helped to identify what they do differently to adjust to the current economic crisis. There were plenty of discussions on how these business leaders get information on government tender announcements. These informal meetings also helped to demonstrate how the Tamkeen's support can best be utilised and what new business opportunities have opened in the market. Discussions were also extended to learn if a foreign-owned business owner can join hands with a local business partner. These were

weekly events held on Thursday evenings between 7 and 10 pm, and there were no meetings in July and August (the warmest months).

Action learning set

The next step was to seek views from comparable, independent, and diversified SMEs who have been in business for over three years (Kameyama and Kobayashi, 2018). This time frame helped to show if these organisations have experienced a similar crisis in the past. Ten SMEs that might have been impacted with the drop in oil prices were contacted (Table 19). Seven SMEs accepted and three rejected the request. The rejection was due to a lack of knowledgeable actors who could participate in an AR. This was followed by formally inviting Org. A as the 8th participant.

Table 19: Business backgrounds of the action learning set

S/No	SME Name		Business background
1	Organisation A (Org. A)		Business processes and strategic IT service consultants
2	Organisation B (Org. B)		Specialised dental clinic
3	Organisation C (Org. C)		Project management consultants
4	Organisation D (Org. D)		Accounting and audit consultants
5	Organisation E (Org. E)		Business and marketing consultants
6	Organisation F (Org. F)		Registrar and transfer agents
7	Organisation G (Org. G)		Building and maintenance contractors
8	Organisation H (Org. H)		Dermatology and laser clinic

3.6.5. Stakeholder mapping process

The critical boundary was selecting the action learning set participants who can add value to this DBA research, but precise guidelines helped address this challenge. The SME

owner was guided in selecting participants, and the meetings were held at the customer's site (Table 15). One critical boundary was selecting participants who have experienced a similar crisis in the past. They did not have to be from the same organisation, but having worked for another organisation and having experienced a similar crisis in the past was mandatory. Another critical boundary was that the participants must also be decision-makers who see the value in this DBA research and must be able to argue or challenge others' thoughts. An added boundary was that participants must know how much the current drop in oil prices has impacted their organisation and the economic crisis in general. The participants who did not fit these criteria were discarded.

The action learning set meetings took place in June and July 2017. These meetings helped to understand what these organisations did better, worse, or different than Org. A to sustain their business in the current economic crisis. The semi-structured questionnaire (Appendix B) helped to facilitate the meetings. To clear any doubts regarding missing or unclear data, a second round of meetings with Heads of Departments (HoD) from Orgs. A to H was carried out in April 2018. These individual meetings did not exceed one hour, and discussions were informal. By not scheduling more than one meeting per day and two meetings per week, this allowed enough time to analyse and transcribe the data before the next meeting.

Org. G (construction) had the highest number of participants; in the medical industry, it was as low as four (Orgs. B and H). In other sectors, it did not exceed six. Wall (2001) says having a higher number of participants does not assure a quality output, while a large group may contribute substantial knowledge, but better results are achieved through a smaller group (Krueger and Casey, 2000).

Section (3.6) findings showed a detailed description of the data collection process applied in this DBA research. (Figure 17) and (Table 14) showed the coordinated intervention strategies of the stakeholder engagement process and the data collection road map.

The next section (3.7) addresses the data analysis process and the announcement of future actions is through (3.7.1). This is followed by the steps in transcript analysis (3.7.2) and ends by comparing Thematic Analysis (TA) versus Content Analysis (CA) (3.7.4).

3.7. Data analysis process

As shown through (3.4), this DBA research involved access to action learning set participants. This meant that care was taken to approach these participants with full consent and with no intended harm or violation of the local culture (Table 15). Creswell (2013) recommends that this must be undertaken under the guidance of research philosophy (3.1) and the interview protocols (3.6.1). The action learning set was informed of the future actions (3.7.1), and (3.7.2) details the steps involved in analysing participant transcripts. This was followed by narrating a detailed analysis of the data analysis steps that relied on the Description, Interpretation, Presumption (D.I.P) coding method (Adu, 2013) and a TA (King and Brooks, 2016). Additionally, the leader core competencies set alongside the OECD competency framework (Figure 5) helped to interpret chapter (6)'s findings. Organisational knowledge and its role in ensuring competitiveness of modern socio-economic systems (Figure 4) and the expected competencies by professional IT architects' frameworks (Figure 13) further strengthened chapter (6)'s findings. Lastly, this chapter ends with the ethical considerations (3.8) that were followed when undertaking this DBA research.

3.7.1. Announcement of future actions

At the end of every action learning set, the participants were thanked and informed of:

- ✓ How the accumulated information would be evaluated, interpreted and transcribed;
- ✓ Any other specific actions that would count; and/or
- ✓ The timeframe of reporting and follow-up actions.

This was followed by personal notes directly addressed to the SME owners, appreciating their time and effort. Within 48 hours of the interviews, the action learning set received the transcripts of the discussions. Krueger (1998) says that action learning sets collapse because of:

- ✓ The inability to update the participants; and/or

- ✓ The inability to narrate the findings in line with the original objective.

3.7.2. *Transcript analysis*

Colaizzi's (1978) phenomenological method helped to analyse transcripts. First this involved reading all the written transcripts several times for an overall understanding, followed by identifying a significant phrase or sentence that displayed a significant experience. Meanings were then developed from these phrases or sentences, followed by clustering them into themes, recognising common themes across the transcripts, and then integrating them into an in-depth, detailed description of the event. In the final step, to validate the findings, some action learning set participants were approached for another round of meetings (3.6.5). At this stage, new data emerged, which allowed verification of the fundamental structure. Morrow, Rodriguez and King (2015) say that even though this method is little known in psychology, it is extensively used in other disciplines and is valuable for qualitative psychologists. Colaizzi's (1978) phenomenological method is a seven-step process, with each step closely bonded to the data generated with a concise description of the event (Table 20). This was then followed by detailing Content Analysis (CA) and TA used as a coding as a tool (3.7.3), followed by qualitative data coding, a three-step process as shown through (Table 21).

3.7.3. *Thematic vs. content analysis*

Both TA and CA analyse life stories and address a particular event to develop insights. However, Vaismoradi, Turunen and Bondas (2013) say CA is suited to analyse a multi-faceted and sensitive matter relating to exploratory work where not much is known. CA focuses more on a micro-level, and even within a qualitative analysis, CA quantifies data and counts instances of codes (Wilkinson, 2000). In contrast, a TA provides a detailed data account of data (Boyatzis, 1998) and is flexible and blends with different research methods. (Figure 18) shows TA's main characteristics and (Figure 19) shows TA's phases.

Table 20: Colaizzi's descriptive phenomenological method

S/No	Step	Description
1	Familiarisation	The researcher familiarises with the data by reading through transcripts several times.
2	Identifying significant statements	The researcher identifies statements that are of direct relevance to the phenomenon under investigation.
3	Formulating meanings	The researcher identifies meanings relevant to the phenomenon that arise from a careful consideration of significant statements. The researcher must reflexively 'bracket' pre-suppositions to stay closely to the phenomenon as experienced (though Colaizzi recognises that complete bracketing is never possible).
4	Clustering themes	The researcher clusters the identified meanings into themes that are common across all accounts. Again bracketing of pre-suppositions is crucial, especially to avoid any potential influence of existing theory.
5	Developing an exhaustive description	The researcher writes a full and inclusive description of the phenomenon, incorporating all the themes produced at step (4).
6	Producing the fundamental structure	The researcher condenses the exhaustive description down to a short, densed statement that captures just those aspects deemed to be essential to the structure of the phenomenon.
7	Seeking verification of the fundamental structure	The researcher returns the fundamentally structured statement to all participants (or sometimes a sub-sample in larger studies) to ask whether it captures their experiences. He/she may go back and modify earlier steps in the analysis in light of this feedback.

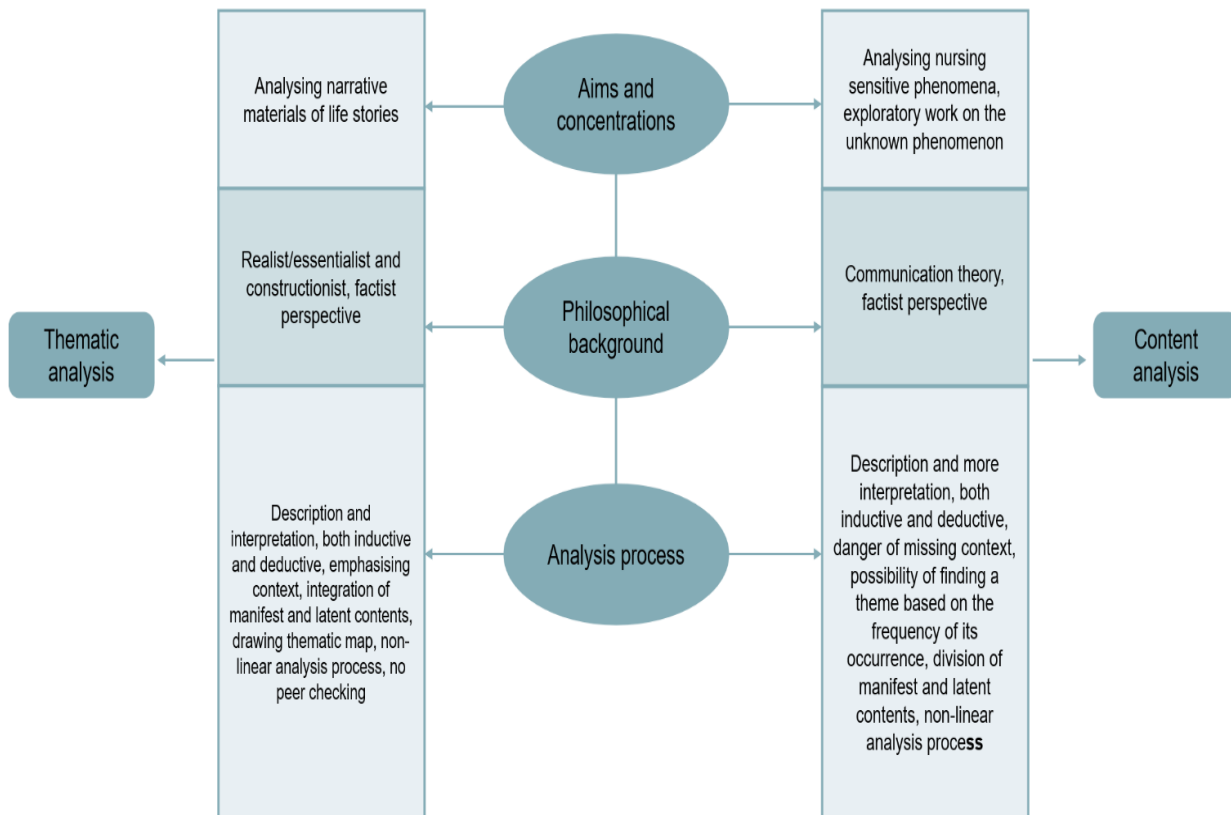
Source: Morrow, Rodriguez and King (2015, p.2)

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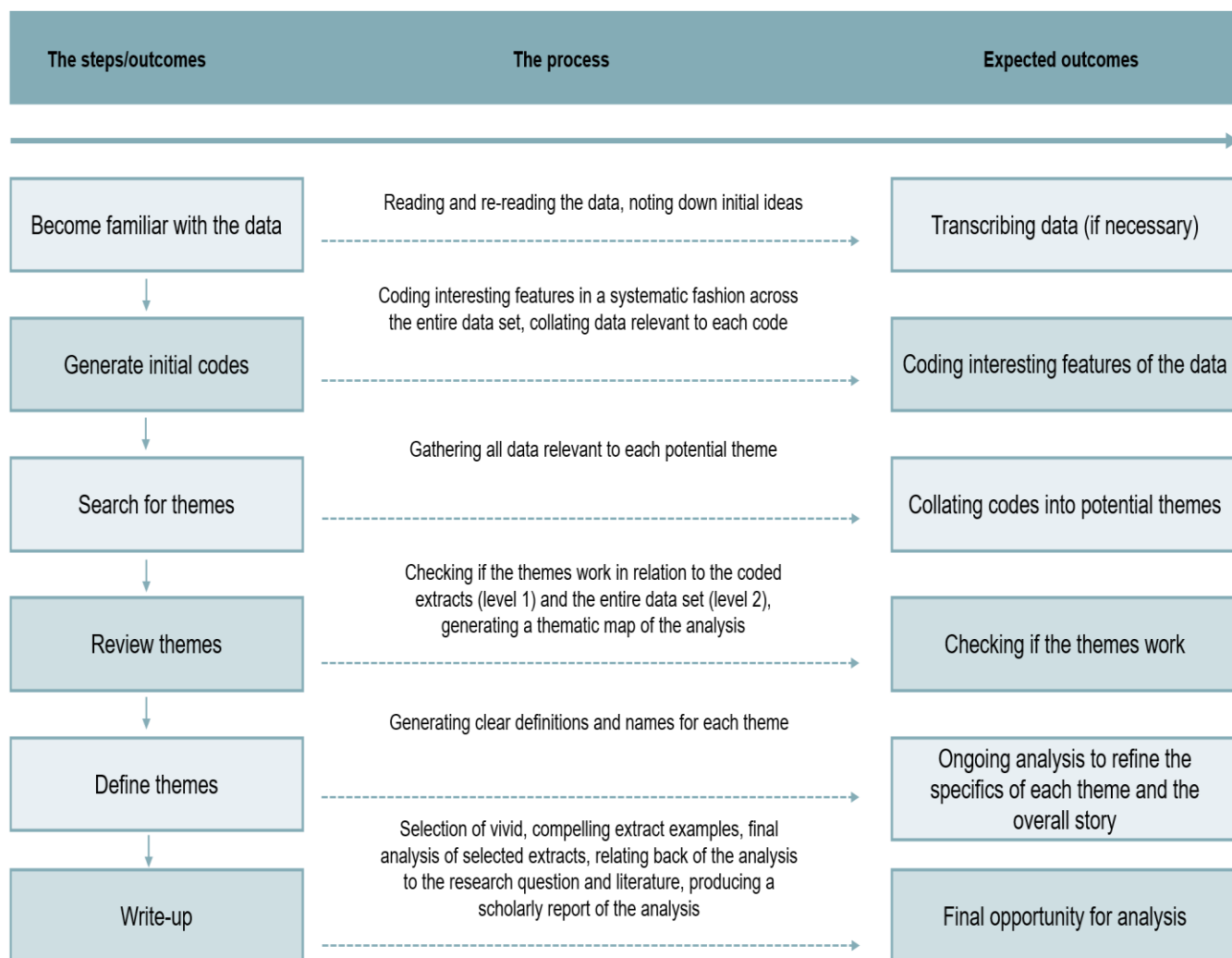
data account of data (Boyatzis, 1998) and is flexible and blends with different research methods. (Figure 18) shows TA's main characteristics and (Figure 19) shows TA's phases.

Figure 18: Main characteristics of TA



Source: Vaismoradi, Turunen and Bordas (2013, p.399)

Figure 19: TA phases



Source: Adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006, p.35) and Maguire and Delahunt (2017, p.335)

3.7.5. Qualitative data coding

Qualitative data coding "involves seeing and interpreting what has been said, written, or done; reflecting on evolving categories; deciding [on] what is important to follow up" (Bazeley, 2013, p.15). Similarly, Adu (2013) says qualitative coding is part of qualitative analysis and is a systematic, transparent, and subjective process of reducing data to a credible format and simultaneously addressing the research problem and research questions. (Table 21) shows the three-step data coding process implied in coding chapters (4), (5) and (6) findings.

Table 21: Three-step data coding process

Step	Chapter	Method	Reference
1	Chapter (4)	Qualitative analysis coding and categorising	Adu (2013)
2	Chapter (5)	Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five approaches	Braun and Clarke (2006); Creswell (2013); King and Brooks (2016); Maguire and Delahunt (2017)
3	Chapter (6)	OECD competency framework	OECD (2014)
		Organisational knowledge and its role in ensuring competitiveness of modern socio-economic systems	Tumenova, Kandrokova, Makhosheva, Batov and Galachieva (2018)
		Expected competencies by professional IT architects	Spencer and Spencer (1993)
		Self-efficacy: toward a unifying theory of behavioural change, psychological review	Bandura (1977)

Chapter (4) coding

To uncover wrong traits discussed in Chapter (4), Adu's (2013) seven steps of manual coding helped to code data and form themes (Table 22). Adu (2019) says description-focused coding is ideal to explain selected excerpts by staying focused on the research question.

Chapter (5) coding

A template analysis helped to uncover the impact of organisational particularities on revenue losses as discussed in chapter (5) and helped in producing a list of codes (a template) to form themes (King and Brooks, 2016). This template included organising, exploring the meeting minutes, coding, and highlighting the key themes (Creswell, 2013). These steps helped to discover patterns across data.

The template analysis began by classifying and grouping the PRIORI⁷ themes. The critical benefit of a template analysis is that it allowed a structured method to classify data while maintaining room to expand themes (King and Brooks, 2016). The template analysis was a mixture of analytical and descriptive data. PRIORI themes (1), (2) and (3) were descriptive and themes (4) and (5) were analytical. An extensive data analysis prior to developing themes (4) and (5) was undertaken. The level (2) code depicts the trait of the

⁷ Identifying some themes in advance.

first code, and the level (3) code is the process relating to the first code. The level (4) code indicates the direct consequences relating to the first code. These steps helped in formulating (5) themes (Table 23).

Table 22: D.I.P coding to uncover wrong traits

Step		Actions Taken
Step 1	Assigned anchor codes	Generated 3 anchor codes 1. What was the impact of drop in oil prices on revenue losses at Org. A? Revenue loss causes 2. What was the influence of discriminatory practices impacting foreign-owned organisations on revenue losses at Org. A? Remedial steps 3. What was the impact of organisational particularities on revenue losses at Org. A? Revenue loss impact
Step 2	Identified relevant excerpts and assigned a code	Data collected by using the semi-structured questionnaire were filtered out and categorised under ten significant areas. Each response was carefully evaluated and assigned a code adopted in step (1).
Step 3	Compiled a list of initial codes	This step involved two stages: (1) coding and (2) categorisation. Description-focused coding was selected to generate codes.
Step 4	Arranged codes alphabetically	Arranged codes alphabetically.
Step 5	Grouped themes	Each research question generated four clusters.
Step 6	Generated themes	By choosing the appropriate excerpts during the review stage, and generating codes and matching them with the excerpts, helped to generate one theme alongside each cluster creating a total of (12) themes.
Step 7	Visualised codes and categories	Findings were tailor-made to meet the research question requirements. The results were as follows: <u>Anchor code (1): Revenue loss causes</u> Cluster (1)-client cost and cash-flow (7) Cluster (2)-challenges in an economic crisis (23) Cluster (3)-declining government projects (5) Cluster (4)-lack of access to vital sources (6) <u>Anchor code (2): Remedial steps</u> Cluster (1)-amendments to the business plan (27) Cluster (2)-benefit from external financial support (5) Cluster (3)-obtaining alternative funding (7) Cluster (4)-minimising underlying organisational costs (5) <u>Anchor code (3): Revenue loss impact</u> Cluster (1)-reduced sales and profits (11) Cluster (2)-impact on organisational costs (10) Cluster (3)-impact on organisational cash-flow (11) Cluster (4)-lack of growth strategies (1)

Source: Adapted from Adu (2013, p.11)

Table 23: Chapter (5) themes

Level 1 code	Level 2 code	Level 3 code	Level 4 code
Theme 1: Inability to benefit from the business circle			
Inability to network with the business circle	Inability to benefit from the business circle	Poorly designed R&S processes	Employees not seeing the benefits of expanding the client base
CEO new to the business world	CEO not seeing the benefits of networking	Inability to select the right employees	Employees not helping to grow the organisation
Theme 2: Lack of access to critical information			
Unable to secure government tenders	Unable to pre-qualify Org. A with government offices	Unable to extract government tender information from the business circle	Not being pro-active in looking for government tender information
Not attempting to visit the tender board	Assumed professional qualifications or years of experience is enough	Not attempting to meet fellow tenderers to see what they do	Assumed that government tenders are extended only to selected organisations
Theme 3: Inability to benefit from external financial support			
Presumed Tamkeen will be discriminatory towards foreign-owned organisations	No collateral support	Unable to ask for loan support	Not utilising Tamkeen's coaching and mentoring help
Org. A being foreign-owned	Not attempting to see the underlying loan support needs	Not attempting to see how the government procedures work	Assumed coaching and mentoring is given only to locally-owned organisations
Theme 4: Neglecting to amend the business plan in line with the economic setting			
Neglecting to identify the market needs	Expansion in an economic crisis	Hiring employees in an economic crisis	Not considering economic crisis
Unable to diversify and reduce risks	Not identifying consequences of an early expansion	Neglecting to see the dangers of adding more employees	Excessive pressure on operating costs
Theme 5: Neglecting to react to the crisis			
Too early to expand	Not imposing restrictions	Quick to expand	Not amending the business plan
Neglecting to calculate underlying costs before expansion	Neglecting to see underlying impacts in an economic crisis	Neglecting to carry out a market study	Not expanding the client base beyond government customers

Chapter (6) coding

The leader core competencies set alongside the OECD competency framework (Figure 5) helped to interpret chapter (6)'s findings. Organisational knowledge and its role in ensuring competitiveness of modern socio-economic systems (Figure 4) and the expected competencies by professional IT architects frameworks (Figure 13) further strengthened chapter (6)'s findings.

The next section (3.8) addresses the ethical considerations relevant to this DBA research.

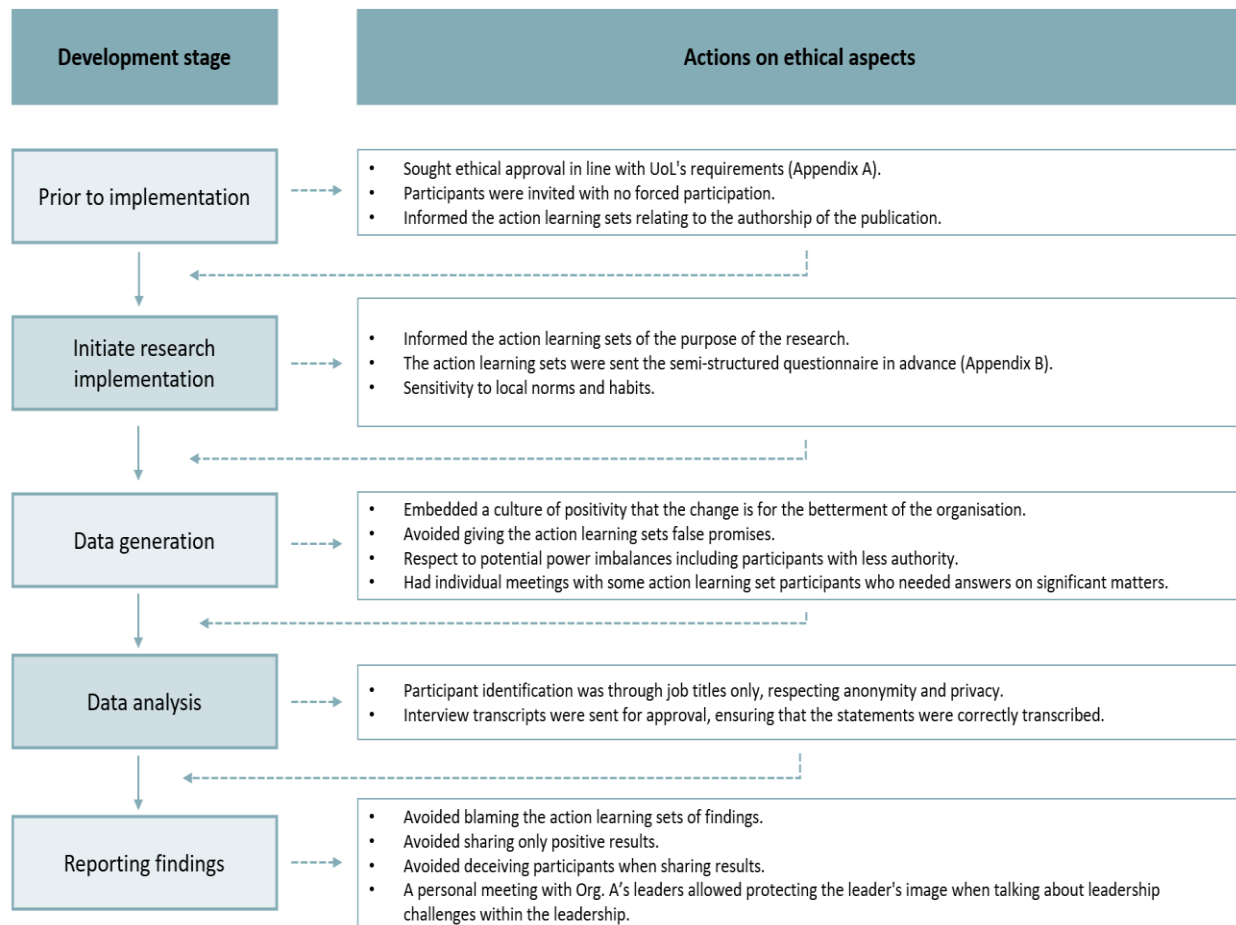
3.8. Ethical considerations

A significant challenge relating to this DBA research was that since data generation involved human interactions relating to positions and relationships governed by existing roles, the researcher was bound by ethical considerations throughout the research (Holian and Coghlan, 2013). Guillemín and Gillam (2004) discuss two dimensions of ethics in research: (1) procedural and (2) practical ethics.

The procedural ethics consisted of many steps (Figure 20). Before reaching out to action learning set, prior approval from UoL was sought (Appendix A). Action learning set participants were invited with no forced participation. Participant identification was through job titles, respecting anonymity and privacy. Before carrying out the action learning set, the semi-structured questionnaire was sent to the organisation in advance (Appendix B). This ensured transparency and gave participants enough time to prepare. Meeting transcripts were sent for approval, ensuring that they have been correctly transcribed, ensuring first-person comments within quotation marks (3.6.1).

All the meetings were audio-recorded using a mobile phone with prior permission, and there were no video recordings. The meetings were held at the customer's site and within 48 hours, data was analysed, transcribed (3.7.1), and stored on a personal computer (PC) secured with a password. Two extra backup copies were also held on the same PC and secured with passwords. The data will be stored for five years.

Figure 20: Ethical considerations followed



Addressing practical ethics mainly related to ethical challenges about unexpected problems with the action learning set (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004). These were primarily associated with challenges relating to being an insider within the research and hidden cultural norms (Holian and Coghlan, 2013). Argyris (1990) sees these as the researcher being radical and unnecessarily forceful in compelling sweeping transformation.

This section showed that with any research, ethical challenges were unavoidable, but they were mostly culturally related. The local culture treats discussing profit gains/losses during challenging economic times as sensitive or forbidden. Being in Bahrain and accustomed to these norms indicated that either the question needs reframing or toning down, or the participant/s should be approached in private. Similarly, business leaders presume that discussing expansion plans attracts unnecessary challenges, letting the

competitors know that even during an economic crisis, organisations generate profits. However, a one-to-one discussion with the business owner(s) helped to re-clarify this area. Additionally, the business owner is a father figure in Arabic society, which compels the subordinates to believe that decisions executed by them are always right. This prevented the subordinates from answering some questions in full or not showing the truth. However, individual meetings helped in addressing them. It was also sensed that some participants were sometimes reluctant to share information and saw the researcher as a fault finder or being unnecessary forceful (Argyris, 1990). However, with continuous reassurance that the journey was about completing DBA research and that any information collected would not be used as a disciplinary tool, it generated trust.

3.9. Chapter summary

In a bid to uncover the theoretical underpinning of the research methodology, this research employed Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill's (2019) research onion model. The research philosophy applied in this DBA research was pragmatism (3.1), and it outlined how a pragmatist begins a study with a problem focused on discovering practical solutions to influence future practitioners and what motivates them. Interpretative frameworks (Table 11) helped to relate the associated philosophical beliefs. This was then followed by discussing the research approaches (3.2), a combination of inductive and abductive.

The methodological choice applied in this DBA research was qualitative (3.3) and combined research strategies comprised of AR, case study, ethnography and narrative analysis (3.4), and justified selecting these particular strategies. This section also discussed the AR general empirical method in AR projects, as shown in (Figure 16). This was followed by discussing the time horizons (3.5), and this DBA research applied the cross-sectional time horizon. (3.6) discussed the data collection steps followed by the data analysis process (3.7). This section outlined how chapters (4), (5) and (6) data were analysed and coded. The last section in this chapter (3.8) discussed the ethical considerations from two dimensions: procedural and practical aspects.

The next chapter discusses the combined causes behind the revenue losses at Org. A and how the evidence was collected and analysed.

Chapter 4: Uncovering the causes of revenue losses at Org. A

This chapter explores how stakeholder responses to the impact of a drop in oil prices impact the organisation from a macro-economic aspect. Org. A began its operations in Bahrain in 2008. In that year, Org. A secured two large government projects that ensured work for five to seven years. While the outlook for Org. A appeared positive, a drop in oil prices hit in June 2014. This unfavourable circumstance contributed to a long-term 75% profit loss. Org. A's leadership also presumed the government would favour locally owned organisations over foreign-owned organisations. These presumptions kept Org. A from seeking Tamkeen's financial and advisory help.

This chapter is divided into three sections. This chapter investigates how the drop in oil prices (4.1), which began in June 2014, impacted Org. A (1.3.1). (4.2) investigates whether any discriminatory practices impacting foreign-owned organisations benefitted from Tamkeen's financial and advisory help (1.3.2). This chapter also explores external stakeholder involvement and their opinions during this economic crisis (1.3.3) and ends by addressing how Orgs. A-H managed to maintain sustainable operations during the economic crisis (4.3). Additionally, a literature review relating to organisational macro-meso, and micro-economic challenges helped to compare, contrast and synthesise other scholars' views to build a theoretical foundation for this DBA research.

Section (4.1) begins by analysing how the drop in oil prices contributes to an organisation's sales and profit losses (4.1.1), followed by the impact of increased utility charges (4.1.2). This section then addresses the impact of the drop in oil prices leading to receiving late payments (4.1.3) and ends by analysing the local culture discouraging outsiders from joining the business circle (4.1.4).










4.1. Bahrain's economic crisis (macro-economic conditions)

As a result of the drop in oil prices that started in June 2014, the government decided to stall large and new infrastructure projects worth over US\$350–400 million, and this has caused severe economic hardships on its direct dependents (MEED, 2018). An additional cost-cutting step included withdrawal of government-sponsored utility subsidies that were



offered to the community (EWA, 2018). With 99% of organisations in Bahrain being SMEs, these decisions caused the direct dependents of government contracts to lose their primary customers and, thus, income (BNA, 2015). When oil prices fluctuated between US\$110–140 pb, the SME sector in Bahrain was lucrative (Vohra, 2017). This changed in 2014 when oil prices dropped to less than US\$40. This section reviews the collective reasons for the drop in oil prices and its consequences through seven comparable, independent and diversified SMEs and Org. A. Furthermore, the researcher conducts a thorough literature review provided with insight of the existing research and debates relevant to the research topic (the impact of the drop in oil prices on SMEs in Bahrain) while comparing, contrasting, and synthesising relevant scholars' views to provide a theoretical foundation.

Formal meetings and networking events confirmed that other organisations, both in similar and dissimilar sectors, had been impacted by the drop in oil prices. However, further evidence was needed to determine whether revenue losses were a result of the drop in oil prices or if there were other causes that were not immediately visible that would have been mostly responsible for its revenue losses. (Figure 21) shows the impact the drop in oil prices had on the action learning set.

Figure 21: Impact of Bahrain's economic crisis on action learning set

Particulars	Org. A	Org. B	Org. C	Org. D	Org. E	Org. F	Org. G	Org. H
Sales and profit losses				N/A				
Increased utility charges	No impact			No impact	No impact	No impact	No impact	No impact
Receiving late payments	Yes. Due to invoice-based payment.	No impact. Direct client payment.	Yes. Due to invoice-based payment.	Yes. Due to invoice-based payment.	Yes. Due to invoice-based payment.	Yes. Due to invoice-based payment.	Government project payment.	No impact. Direct client payment.
Local culture	Yes	No impact	No impact	No impact	No impact	No impact	No impact	No impact

Legend:

-  - Loss of money
-  - No impact on utility charges

4.1.1. Drop in oil prices contributes to an organisation's sales and profit losses

Org. A experienced the highest revenue loss, resulting in a high profit loss. This finding is supported by the OM's quote: *"we have experienced **50% lower sales** and a **75% lower profit**."* Org. E has also experienced a 50% lower profit margin, evidenced through the CEO's quote: *"we feel the pain of a **50% drop in our profit margin**."* For Org. G, the profit loss has been minimal. Listening to the FM's statement: *"the current **drop in oil prices** has caused our revenue to drop marginally. Even under a grim economic climate, we achieved our sales targets, but the government's decision to stall large infrastructure projects has **eroded our profit margin by 40%**."*

On the other hand, Org. B had not been significantly impacted by the drop in oil prices. With customers becoming cost-conscious in an economic crisis, this had been acceptable, heard through the CMO's quote: *"our projected **revenue margin has shrunk by 20%**, in addition to a **15% drop in mark-up**."* Org. D has not experienced loss of sales, but by not managing to get new customers, its growth had slowed. This was evidenced through the MP1's quote: *"we have **not experienced a lowered sales volume**, but **not having new customers had delayed our growth by 25%**."*

Org. F was not spared by the drop in oil prices either, but the impact on its profit margin was only 10%. Its CEO stated: *"we have experienced a **20% reduced turnover** and **10% profit loss**."* Org. H lost less than 20% of sales. Analysing what has been said by the CRM: *"the **patient numbers have declined**. This has hampered our profit goals – **profits are less than 20%**."* The organisation that experienced the least impact was Org. C (2.3%). The reason behind this could be the type of projects it undertakes. Its CFO stated: *"in the present crisis, **the impact on our turnover has been marginal (2.3%)**."*

A study carried out in Oman (UIHaq, 2017) from 2012 to 2015 shows a positive correlation existed between the drop in oil prices and an organisation's profit when the oil prices ranged between US\$115 and US\$50. However, there was inconsistency between the profitability and the revenue. This study concluded that due to the high operating costs of

doing business in the region, with a drop in oil prices, the income of an organisation could still grow but the profit margin could decrease.

In summary, the initial findings were that the economic crisis had impacted the entire action learning set at differing scales as a result of a drop in oil prices. It was evident that Org. A experienced the highest profit loss (75%). Similarly, Orgs. E and G experienced 50% and 40% profit losses, respectively. Even though the figure was not exceptionally high, Orgs. B and H experienced a 20% profit loss, whereas this figure was only 10% for Org. F and 2.3% for Org. C. While Org. D did not report a profit loss, a lack of new customers delayed its growth by 25%. Analogous to the work of UIHaq (2017), it was evident that a drop in oil prices had a direct correlation to an organisation's profit but no relationship with its revenue. The reason why Org. A endured hardships more than the other organisations will now be explored.

4.1.2. Increased utility charges

Only two organisations experienced increased utility charges. For Org. B, this was a 20% increase, evidenced through the CMO's quote: "*we have experienced a **20% increase in utility charges.***" The impact has been marginal for Org. C. In the CFO's own words, "*utility charges have risen marginally by 3–5%.*"

Except for Org. B (a dental clinic), the increased utility charges for other organisations had no severe impact. As the impact was higher for water bills, the increase will impact households more. As the operations of Org. G were mostly site-based, the impact on the organisation led to no significant increase. The other organisations were small offices that were primarily operated during the traditional five-day working week.

A study carried out by Wang (2016) among 130,000 SMEs across 135 developing countries identified increasing utility charges as a severe problem faced by small organisations. In 2017, Alviss Contracting in Australia showed the impact of increased utility charges and concluded that New South Wales (NSW) (31%), South Australia (33%), Queensland (22%), the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) (25%), and Western

Australia (13%) were the most impacted. Small and medium organisations, with fewer than 200 employees, account for AU\$10 billion of the total spending annually on electricity and gas. Ontario business owners claim high utility charges threatened their survival. Independent business groups criticised utility charges as their biggest challenge (Chu, 2017).

In summary, apart from two organisations, the rest did not raise concerns related to increased utility charges. This can be due to the early stages of the revised utility charges (Figure 3), and organisations may have only experienced a partial impact. However, Org. B reported the highest increase of 20% mainly due to its industry. Org. C operates on a 'projectised' basis, with no requirement for a permanent office, and the impact on increased utility charges was marginal. Org. A operates during a five-day business week, with services extended at customers' sites. Therefore, the impact on increased utility charges for Org. A was low.

4.1.3. Impact of the drop in oil prices leading to late payments

An additional challenge was collecting customer dues. This was evidenced by individual quotes from Orgs. A, C, D and E. Org. A declared: ***"not getting timely customer payments is disrupting our cash flow."*** Org. C's CFO also shared concerns: ***"we are not receiving timely contractor payments."*** Org. D's MP1 shared mutual concerns: ***"delays in getting customer payments are significant challenges for a small organisation like us."*** However, Org. E's (CEO) has seen an improvement in the recent past, sharing: ***"in the past 12 months, we experienced an effort in collecting customer payments, but this has improved to a certain degree in the last six months."*** Org. F's customers, being investors, fear a loss of reputation in the market and are therefore punctual with payments, which was confirmed by the AGM: ***"we have not been experiencing hitches in collecting customer past dues. Our customers are swift with their payments, fearing a loss of reputation in the corporate world."***

Since oil revenues continue to be the driving force of government expenditure, the impact of reduced spending keeps reverberating across GCC economies. In 2016, a combination

of projects from private and government-funded offices fell by 32% from the previous year, with a further 8% decline in 2017 (MEED, 2018). Bills are often paid late, or governments renegotiate contractual terms, even after work has been completed (Young, 2018). The overall challenges relating to delayed payments in the region have worsened in the past few years. Based on the project, late payments exceeding two or three times the agreed contractual conditions have become a familiar pattern (Fahy, 2017).

Late payments generate an adverse impact in multiple ways, and small organisations spend significant effort and time trying to collect their dues. Abdul-Rahman, Kho and Wang (2013), in a study conducted across Malaysia, say the lost days in collecting customer payments could be used to increase productivity. The main consequences are reduced investments with a delay in meeting supplier payments (Sweeney, 2010).

In sum, as the general business culture is a driver against late payments, customers do not see significant consequences if a payment is late. In Bahrain, customers informally agree on late payments, or debts are written off on religious grounds. The feedback of Orgs. E and F, which have seen significant improvements in recent months, depicts that with changes applied, there are many ways other organisations can improve.

4.1.4. Local culture discourages outsiders from joining the business circle

The local culture is built around shared religion and customs among extended family members. The preference is either for immediate family members or for GCC nationals (2.2.4). In terms of securing business deals, the close ties shared between the community ensures that business secrets are tightly protected and are exclusive to this network (4.3.4). Evidenced by Org. A's CEO's quote: *"Bahrain, being small and with a close business circle, means the **preference is always for immediate family members.** People take time to develop trust with anyone outside this circle. I respect these cultural and religious bonds, but these unwelcome gestures are hindering gaining access to vital information."* These factors led to Org. A being marginalised and prevented it from joining the business circle and seeking information (5.1.1).

Middle Eastern businessmen look for family, connections, and friendship. They neither view external appearances as prestigious, nor do they impress customers and lenders by these means. It is essential to stress that in the Middle East and Latin America, your 'friends' will support you. The fact that they personally are experiencing challenges is not an excuse for neglecting their acquaintances. They are meant to look out for your interests (Hall, 1960). According to the findings of Hall (1960), Org. A was not marginalised with the external matters relating to the business. Org. A lacked connections from the business circle, and as it was foreign-owned, it was not considered a 'friend' in the business circle (5.1.1).

4.1.5. Concluding remarks associated with Bahrain's economic crisis (macro-economic conditions)

The initial findings showed that the drop in oil prices led to an economic crisis where Orgs. A, E and G experienced the highest profit losses (4.1.1). The losses experienced by the other organisations were considered acceptable during an economic crisis. Except for Org. B, the rest of the action learning set had experienced a marginal increase in utility charges (4.1.2). First, this can be directly related to the industry. Second, the full impact of the increased utility charges was only partially implemented at the time of completing this DBA research. The late payments were primarily related to the government stalling projects and customers re-negotiating payment plans. Late payments appear to be related to cultural habits and did not significantly impact the entire action learning set (4.1.3). Lastly, Org. A lacked connections within the business circle and, therefore, was considered an outsider (4.1.4).

The core advancements in thinking brought about by (4.1) findings showed that a drop in oil prices disrupts a country's macro-economic environment (Hamilton, 1983; Ederington and Guan, 2010). In such an economic environment, a government is compelled to imply cost-cutting steps to curtail government spending. These steps can vary from stalling large infrastructure projects (MEED, 2018) to or withdrawal of government-sponsored subsidies given to the community (EWA, 2018). These steps vary according to the country's macro-economic environment. However, (4.1) also showed that cultural habits

would remain unchanged even during an economic crisis. Late payments were one step (Fahy, 2017; Young, 2018). Another step was that the business circle preferred to work with immediate family members and treated foreigners as outsiders (Hall, 1960). However, this section showed that except for sales and revenue losses, one could not consider the other factors as significant influences on an organisation's revenue losses (Deloitte, 2019), but business owners must learn to overcome these challenges and adapt to the economic environment.

Analysing the four factors, except for sales and revenue losses as showed in (4.1.1), Org. A's 75% profit loss cannot be explained by the economic crisis alone. In this aspect, the following section (4.2) investigates if there had been any discriminatory practices hindering foreign-owned organisations benefitting from Tamkeen's support.

4.2. Discriminatory practices impact foreign-owned organisations (meso-economic conditions)

This section investigates if there had been any discriminatory practices hindering foreign-owned organisations benefitting from Tamkeen's support. To investigate this, as discussed in (3.6.4), meeting some government actors (January 2015 to December 2016) helped to shape and respond to some doubts. The aim through these meetings was to understand the support extended by these government offices for SMEs and what qualifies them to receive them. This was followed by, as showed in (3.6.4) and summarised in (7.3.2), assessing how Orgs. A to H have made use of such support. It was necessary to investigate why Org. A did not utilise funding support from the primary funding organisation, Tamkeen, that was spread across all industries, irrespective of the ownership and size. This section investigates if Org. A was denied benefits or if it was not qualified to benefit from its help. Was this due to being unaware that such facilities were available, or was Org. A denied support at any stage? Was Org. A being discriminated against because it is owned and headed by a foreigner?

4.2.1. Overview of Tamkeen's support schemes

(Figure 22) shows Tamkeen's support schemes available to Bahrain's SMEs.

Figure 22: Overview of Tamkeen's support schemes to SMEs



Tamkeen Bahrain

Founded in 2006, Tamkeen's objective is to provide loan and advisory support to all SMEs regardless of ownership and size. Funding for Tamkeen is derived through fees collected from the private sector by the Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA). Tamkeen's segment-based packages are in line with the market needs of SMEs (Tamkeen, 2018). Tamkeen also provides coaching and mentoring to all organisations at different maturity levels. Within its three strategic pillars of: 1) diversifying offerings, 2) accelerating delivery, and 3) sustaining impact, Tamkeen's focus involves developing the business sector. Tamkeen helps organisations expand either home or abroad through its Tamweel+ support, but it does not pay cash or cash equivalent options to eradicate an organisation's profit loss.

Sections (4.2.2) to (4.2.5) assesses how the support given to the action learning set helped them grow and sustain their organisations. These sections also addressed the action learning set participants that did not ask for financial support and how these organisations managed to sustain their operations during this economic crisis. Evidence collected from the action learning set was strengthened, referring to (Table 24) and participant quotes.

Table 24: Overview of support sought

Particulars	Org. A	Org. B	Org. C	Org. D	Org. E	Org. F	Org. G	Org. H
Business development programme	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Training and wage support	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓
Tamweel+ support	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓
International placement	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Coaching and mentoring programme	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗

4.2.2. Tamkeen's business development programme

This programme provides organisations with financial support to propel their growth. The financing is based on the organisation's business needs. Tamkeen regularly amends its loan and advisory support programmes in line with market and economic needs. Initially, when the programme was launched, it allowed 70% of the total amount asked, but under its revised plan, it now allocates 50% of the total amount. The next paragraphs explain how the action learning set benefitted from Tamkeen's support.

Org. A presumed that the loans were only allocated to locally owned organisations. Evidenced through the OM's quote: "we heard that **Tamkeen's loans are extended** to buy office equipment and wage support help for Bahraini-owned organisations, but as we are 100% foreign-owned, we were not sure if we **can ask for Tamkeen's financial**

support.” By presuming that Tamkeen’s loans were only for locally owned organisations, Org. A was unable to see the available benefits.

Orgs. C (AGM) and F (CEO) shared thoughts that internal funding helped them: “we operate on a ‘projectised’ basis. Once a **project reaches its maturity**, we wind up the project and **pass the operating costs to our subsidiary offices**. In this way, we have no daily running costs, and see **no reason for external financial support**.” Similar thoughts were shared by Org. F (CEO): “internal funding through our subsidiary offices has helped us to keep our operating costs at bay, and **not wanting to have loans**.” In this economic crisis, internal funding arrangements within the group, without requiring external financial support, helped Orgs. C and F sustain operations.

Orgs. B, D, E, G’s CEOs and H’s (MP1) benefitted from Tamkeen’s 70% allocation at its inception and shared similar thoughts: “if we obtain loans, **we have to shoulder 50% of the loan amount**, which is risky in the current economic crisis. However, at the inception, with **Tamkeen bearing 70% of the loan amount** helped us with machinery **and equipment and marketing and branding**. This arrangement helped us to safeguard **70% of our operating costs and save our capital**. This **saving is now helping us to sustain ourselves**.” Fearing additional costs as an unnecessary burden, Orgs. B, D, E, G and H saw no benefit in seeking additional financial support. However, at the inception, Tamkeen bore 70% of the loan amount, which helped these organisations safeguard operating and capital costs.

In summary, Orgs. C and F were able to sustain their operations without taking external financial support. Orgs. B, D, E, G and H benefitted from Tamkeen’s 70% loan help at its inception. However, Org. A presumed Tamkeen would discriminate against helping foreign-owned organisations. Therefore, Org. A spent a substantial amount on its initial set-up which could have been allocated towards operating costs.

4.2.3. Tamkeen's training and wage support programme

Tamkeen has an additional co-financing programme for organisations aiming to hire, train or increase the salaries of new Bahraini graduates. Organisations could benefit from 50% support in the first year, and 30% for the next six months, with a maximum cap of BD500 per month per employee. Expatriates or employed Bahrainis are ineligible for this support.

Not wanting to drain its operating costs in the current economic crisis, Orgs. D (MP2) and F (FM) imposed a freeze on new hires. Org. D's (MP2) shared thoughts: *"we did not experience a profit loss, but to not drain our capital, we imposed a freeze on new hires."* To be followed by Org. F's (FM): *"under the current economic crisis, we **do not aim to hire new workers**, and so far, worker **retention has not been a problem for us**."* Orgs. D and F shared no information on whether they benefitted from the wage support programme.

Orgs. B, E, G and H benefitted from the Tamkeen's wage support programme, with Org. B's (CEO) saying, *"to keep our operating costs at bay, we **obtained wage support help** for our new Bahraini employees. By doing it, this placed a lesser impact on our operating costs."* Org. H's (FM) agreed with Org. E's (CEO) and shared thoughts: *"in the current economic crisis, salaries have been maintained, and the Tamkeen's wage support programme even helped us to increase Bahraini employee's salaries".* Considering the industry type, Org. G benefitted at large: *"it was a win-win situation for both the employer and employee. This scheme not only helped **us hire** new Bahraini engineers but even **minimised the risk** of hiring new employees as well. Even our new employees benefitted from the **certification courses**."* Tamkeen's wage support programme helped Orgs. E, G and H to reduce the risks associated with hiring new employees, which helped to minimise the impact of its operating costs.

In summary, Org. A was unaware of Tamkeen's wage support programme and therefore did not benefit from the available perks. By imposing a freeze on new hires, Orgs. D and F managed to restrict its cash flow. Furthermore, Orgs. B, E, G and H benefitted from the wage support and the certification programmes.

4.2.4. Tamkeen's Tamweel+ programme

For organisations seeking expansion opportunities either at home or abroad, Tamkeen extends Sharia-compliant loans⁸ at 8%, reducing balance through collaborative partner banks. Tamkeen shoulders 70% of the loan amount with an agreed loan repayment period of up to 10 years. Loans range from BD1-2.5 million based on the bank's policy.

Only Org. H benefitted from Tamkeen's Tamweel+ programme. Org. H's (CEO) admitted that depending only on dermatology and laser would not sustain operations, sharing: *"dermatology and laser is fast gaining recognition in Bahrain. This year, there are more, at least five to seven, new clinics that offer similar services, which is **increasing competition**. However, **seeing the future**, laying all your eggs in one basket is risky. Keeping this in mind, we saw the potential in **transforming our clinic into diagnostic and polyclinics**. 70% of the required funds were obtained through Tamkeen's Tamweel+ programme."* However, the CEO sensed that the two new clinics would take time to attract customers and expanded into two new business sectors. Evidenced through the CEO's quote: *"we trust in **keeping our customers close and treating them well** and, in doing so, recently opened a pharmacy and laboratory. In this way, our customers do not have to go 'clinic hopping' for blood tests and prescribed medication. All these **services are served under one roof**. While external customers can obtain our services, our regular customers enjoy **our services at discounted prices**."*

Org. H's (CEO) was pro-active and knowledgeable of Tamkeen's programmes and saw Tamkeen's Tamweel+ as beneficial to expand into many sectors. Org. B's (CEO) also wanted to transform the organisation into a polyclinic but assessed that borrowing through banks is risky and complex, and shared concerns: *"to transform the current clinic into a polyclinic, **funding will be sought through personal reserves and family borrowings**. We fear **not being able to meet regular loan installments**. Internal financing is not only tax-free, but informal discussions help to extend repayment plans, which is challenging with bank loans. Furthermore, a bank loan is not only dangerous but time-consuming as well."*

⁸ An Islamic mortgage that doesn't charge interest on loans.

In summary, only Org. H benefitted from Tamkeen's Tamweel+ programme to expand into four new business sectors within Bahrain, whereas Org. B perceived borrowing funds to expand during an economic crisis as risky and complex. No other organisations benefitted from the Tamweel+ programme.

4.2.5. Tamkeen's international placement programme

Tamkeen's international placement programme provides financial support for organisations to send its Bahraini employees on international assignments, training or educational courses. 80% of the funds are provided for a duration of two to twelve months. This support is used to fund employees' salaries, flight, visa, medical insurance, and settlement costs during the stay. No participating organisations in this DBA research used this programme.

4.2.6. Tamkeen's coaching and mentoring programme

Through its advisory service platform, Tamkeen extends mentoring and coaching support to enrich business owners during any stage of their business cycle.

Org. A said that it was unaware of this programme. The OM said, "*we thought that Tamkeen's coaching and mentoring were only for **locally-owned or big organisations.***" The other organisations shared no comments on benefitting from this programme.

During an economic crisis, government support programmes play a supportive role to help SMEs overcome slow growth (Fatoki, 2014). A survey (Peter et al. 2018) conducted across 400 small and medium Nigerian business owners claimed government played a significant role in uplifting them. This survey showed that in Korea and China, the government provided considerable help to develop both small and medium sectors. In 1997, the Chinese government supported the small and medium sectors, which managed to elevate the economic status of nearly 200 million people. Financial support not only brings in growth and development across the industry, but it also advises on risk reduction and business activities.

4.2.7. Concluding remarks associated with discriminatory practices impact foreign-owned organisations (meso-economic conditions)

(Table 25) shows the main findings from the action learning set on how these organisations managed to lessen the impact operating under the current economic crisis. Through Tamkeen’s business development programme, Orgs. B, D, E, F, G and H sought financial support to buy new machinery and equipment or implement marketing and branding campaigns (4.2.2). The training and wage support programme helped Orgs. B, E, G and H to lessen their operating costs (4.2.3). The Tamweel+ programme helped Org. H to expand overseas (4.2.4). No action learning set participant benefitted from either the international placement (4.2.5) or Tamkeen’s coaching and mentoring programmes (4.2.6).

Table 25: Action learning set findings associated with the meso-economic conditions

Particulars	Org. A	Org. B	Org. C	Org. D	Org. E	Org. F	Org. G	Org. H
Lack of knowledge on loan schemes	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
No collateral assets	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Fearing pay-back	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
Internal funding	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗
Capital	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Amended business plan	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Low operational costs	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓
Freeze on new hires	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Freeze on buying new equipment	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗
New business opportunities	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

By seeking financial support at different stages of the business cycle or with internal financial arrangements, the action learning set lowered its operating costs and preserved its capital. However, Org. A continuously used its internal savings, which significantly

impacted its capital. In the action learning set findings discussed in (4.2), it was observed that Tamkeen practised no discriminatory procedures that would hinder foreign-owned organisations from operating under the economic crisis. Org. A presumed that Tamkeen's support was only for locally owned or large organisations and neglected to inquire about available benefits.

The core advancements in thinking brought about by (4.2) findings showed the importance of seeking external financial support in an economic crisis, either through personal or government (Fatoki, 2014). In a crisis, business owners should be proactive to see the government's help irrespective of size and ownership (Peter et al. 2018). Presumptions will only hinder them benefitting from external financial support (A'Ali, 2017). This section also showed that business owners must regularly check for available support rather than waiting until a crisis hits.

The next section (4.3) addresses how organisations A to H managed to maintain sustainable operations during this economic crisis.

4.3. Detecting organisational particularities (micro-economic conditions)

This section addresses how organisations A to H managed to maintain sustainable operations during the economic crisis. What did they do to adapt to changes? What did they do differently from Org. A? The following discussions from (4.3.1) and (4.3.2) attempt to uncover what organisations A to H did better, worse or different to adjust to the economic crisis. This is followed by discussing challenges from taking Tamkeen's financial help (4.3.3). This section ends by discussing the Tender Board's role towards allocation of government's tender quotas (4.3.4).

4.3.1. *The role of failed or stalled government projects*

The action learning set identified organisational particularities as to how the role of failed or stalled government projects impacted each organisation. During the golden era of Bahrain (2008–2011) (1.2.3), contractors depended on large government projects.

However, stalling these government projects caused both contractors and sub-contractors (MEED, 2018) to lose their primary income and customers (BNA, 2015).

Orgs. A and G secured government⁹ projects under two different categories. However, based on the project category (essential and non-essential), the government stalled large and new infrastructure projects worth over US\$350–400 million, and this decision impacted Org. A considerably. The CEO said: “*when the **projects were terminated** with the reasoning that **our services were non-essential**, this began to **disrupt our cash flow**.*” Org. G, as part of a Government Action Plan (GAP) through the Saudi Development Fund (SDF), was granted permission to construct 25,000 government housing units (BNA, 2017). As per the donor’s contractual terms, such plans must proceed as planned. Org. G’s (CEO), having secured this opportunity, shared: “*even though we experienced a 40% loss in the previous years, the **newly awarded government project** should help us to be **sustainable for the next two years**. Since **our project is considered essential**, we are confident it will go ahead as planned.*” Org. G, by having secured projects under the SDF, has managed to keep the organisation afloat.

From 2015 onwards, the government decided to stall large and new infrastructure projects worth over US\$350–400 million except for the ongoing housing projects intended for its citizens. As per the royal order, providing citizens with affordable housing is a fundamental requirement (Construction Week, 2018). Org. G had been in the construction industry for over four decades. Experience had taught Org. G to sense forthcoming economic crises and adapt to the situation accordingly. Also, having earned a reputation for building affordable housing units, Org. G continuously secured government projects. When the drop in oil prices occurred and the government’s decision to terminate newly awarded projects impacted other contracting organisations, the Ministry of Housing (MoH) had awarded Org. G seven essential housing projects. Org. G had also secured contracts regarding civil and structure, electrical, public health engineering, air-conditioning and maintenance jobs under the Ministry of Works (MoW) since 2010.

⁹ Org. A secured a ‘closed contract’, whereas Org. G secured the project through a tendering process.

However, Org. A's services were categorised as non-essential and were ineligible for these projects. Org. A's operating cost was disrupted when the government stalled non-essential projects. A primary reason as discussed through (1.2.3) was that Org. A was too dependent on government projects and neglected to pay adequate attention to private sector customers when drafting its business plan. Furthermore, (6.2.2) shows Org. A. neither sought consultants to draft its business plan nor identify the loopholes when a government project is withdrawn. Additionally, as seen in (6.1.1), Org. A neglected to seek guidance from the business circle on how other business leaders were managing the situation when the government imposed such decisions.

In summary, organisational particularities on the impact of the current economic crisis from each individual organisational perspective was observed. Org. A was significantly impacted by the government's decision to stall its projects. While Org. G experienced a profit loss, the newly awarded government housing project and the ongoing projects and civil and maintenance contracts were safeguarding it from further losses. This privilege was unavailable to Org. A. The remaining organisations shared no concerns regarding government-sponsored projects.

4.3.2. Remedial steps towards survival and sustainability

This section identifies remedial steps towards survival and sustainability by Orgs. A to H to adapt to the economic crisis and what these organisations did better, worse, or different.

Decisions taken to expand within Bahrain

Orgs. B and H shared expansion into polyclinics. Org. B's (CEO) added thoughts: "we have **no intention** of expanding **beyond Bahrain**, but to offer additional services, we have **converted the dental clinic into a polyclinic**." Org. H's (CEO) admitted that relying only on dermatology and laser is not going to help it survive, sharing: "*dermatology and laser is fast gaining recognition in Bahrain. This year, there are more, at least five to seven, new clinics that offer similar services, which is **increasing competition**. However, **seeing the future**, laying all your eggs in one basket is risky. Keeping this in mind, we*

saw the potential in **transforming our clinic into diagnostic and polyclinics.**” Except for Orgs. B and H, the other organisations did not discuss expansion plans within Bahrain. However, Orgs. A and H shared expansion plans beyond Bahrain.

Decisions taken to expand beyond Bahrain

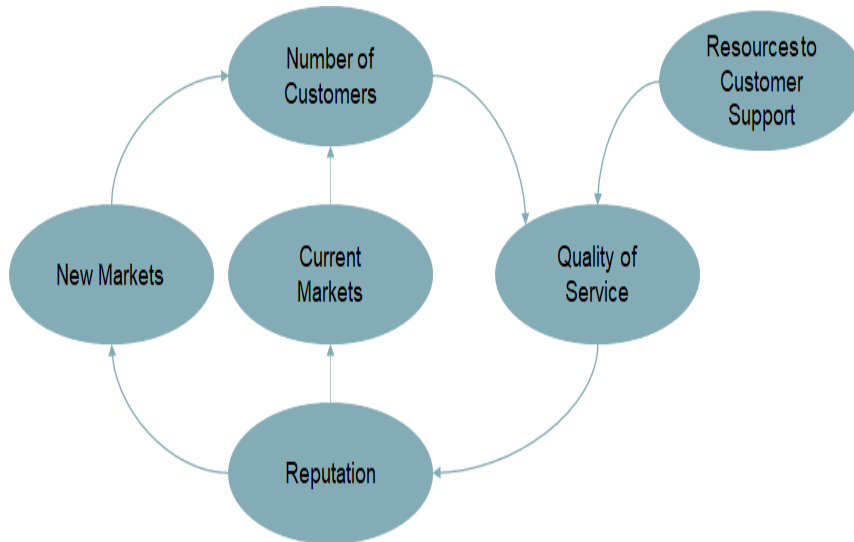
Orgs. A and G planned to expand operations beyond Bahrain. Org. G moved its production facility to Iran to curb operating costs and preserve its capital. The AGM said, *“living and working in Iran for us as Arabs is cost-effective. I have decided to **move out my production facility to Iran**; by doing this, I have managed to reduce the **operating costs by two-thirds**. Also, finding workforce in Iran is easier and cost-effective as well.”* Org. A’s (CEO) also said, *“having secured government projects at the early stage of our business gave us the confidence to look beyond Bahrain, and through this mind-set, **within two years, we expanded our wings to Saudi Arabia**.”* However, as discussed in (5.5.2), Org. A was unable to carry out a feasibility study before moving into Saudi Arabia, further straining its operating costs.

Organisations who have been successful at home often envisage the same benefit in the overseas markets (Winch and Binachi, 2006). Following a period of success and growth in the home market, such organisations often see the move as a route to rapid expansion. (Figure 23) sees what drives development away from home. Additionally, (Figure 24) shows the export boost to an already successful business at home. Organisations must understand that entering new and unfamiliar markets can be complex, having to deal with one or multiple challenges. If the growth is not well managed, it leads to undesirable consequences. A few challenges include sales and service functions, language differences, regulatory mechanisms, disrupted supply chains, and managing a complex network. The remaining organisations shared no concerns relating to expansion within or beyond Bahrain.

By incorporating the findings of Winch and Binachi (2006), the reputation Org. A earned for its quality services at home was the initial decision to pursue its success beyond Bahrain. Having won government projects at an early stage was an additional boost as

well. However, as shown in (Figure 24), neglecting to carry out a feasibility study before moving into Saudi Arabia did not generate the expected results for Org. A.

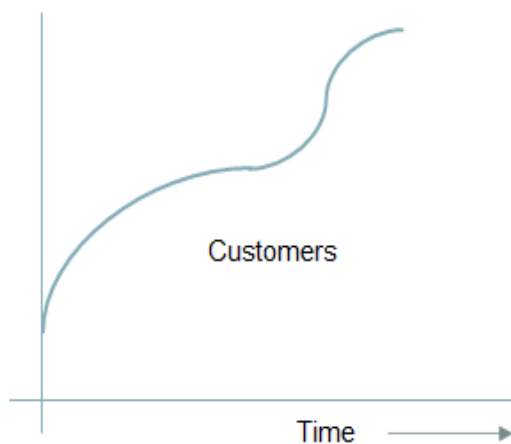
Figure 23: Growth drivers



Source: Adapted from Winch and Binachi (2006, p.77)

Figure 24: Growth with desired export boost

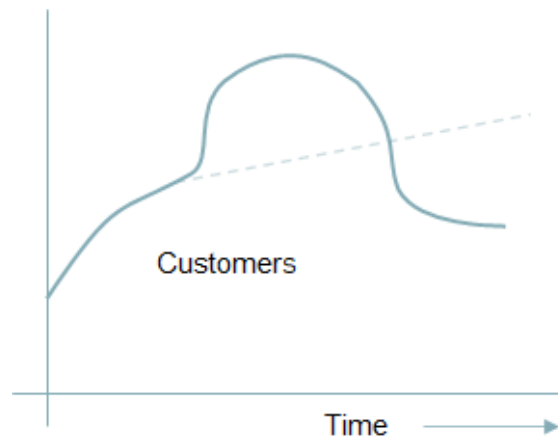
This loop depicts the additional cost burdens in supporting international customers, and this can threaten a hard-earned reputation.



Source: Adapted from Winch and Binachi (2006, p.77)

(Figure 25) shows how quality and reputation loss impact an organisation's operations, even losing its foothold at home. This is applicable across small organisations that are trying to grow alongside a viable backdrop of restricted capitalisation (Anderson, Boocock and Graham, 2001). This can lead to long-term consequences to secure payments in a foreign country.

Figure 25: Inadequate resources damage growth trajectory



Source: Adapted from Winch and Binachi (2006, p.78)

Decisions taken to insource business activities

In this economic crisis, organisations began to implement cost-cutting practices by outsourcing accounting and human resources jobs to small and medium-sized organisations. According to the MP1 from Org. D, *“even though we have experienced a slow growth, since the drop in oil prices, to curtail operating costs, medium and large organisations began **outsourcing accounting and human resources jobs** to organisations like us. This has helped us to keep our cash flow intact.”* While Org. A was armed with information consultants, it was challenged to sustain the operations of these consultants' operations while keeping them unaware that the organisation was insourcing jobs, as was like Org. D.

Outsourcing IT work to a third-party provider is increasing. Carmel and Agarwal (2002) shared success stories of three major global organisations. In 2000, GE outsourced IT work to India worth US\$200 million. In 2001, this increased to US\$400 million. In 2002, it

reported 7,000 outsourced software professionals. In addition to India, GE outsourced IT work to Mexico and China. Intel Corp opened a software lab in central Russia, which employs 100 local programmers and 100 contractors. Ford has shifted most of its computer-aided design work to India to slash operating costs from US\$30–60 million per year (Copeland, 2001). Carmel and Agarwal (2002) show that large organisations outsource most of the IT work to a third party to reduce operating costs. However, Org. A's operating costs were further hampered from not outsourcing work.

Decisions taken to outsource business activities

Org. E amended its business model by sub-contracting projects to third-party provider. The AGM confirms this: *“to cut our costs, we have sub-contracted part of our business needs to freelancers or virtual offices. Under the current economic crisis and having experienced a 50% profit loss, we **cannot afford to hire new employees**. Instead of new hires, with an adjustment to our business model, we have decided to **sub-contract** our business needs to freelancers or virtual offices. This option is easy and cost-effective as well.”* Org. E managed to sub-contract part of its business needs to cut costs instead of hiring new employees.

Business transactions with low insecurity and low assets are more likely to be outsourced (Aubert, Rivard and Patry, 1996). Service firms, when dealing with constant changes requiring continuous adaptation, should consider outsourcing as an operation choice (Miles and Snow, 2001). When organisations need to redefine their business activities, outsourcing adds significant value. However, at present, there seems to be minimal attention on outsourcing (Arias-Aranda, Bustinza and Barrales-Molina, 2011). Outsourcing is an excellent way to reduce economic pressure and to optimise costs (Table 26). However, having lost two key government projects, Org. A was left with no work to outsource, and by not seeking an alternative benefit of undertaking insourcing activities from large or medium organisations similar to Org. D, this has placed a significant pressure on its operating costs. The remaining organisations shared no concerns regarding insourcing or outsourcing business activities.

Table 26: Benefits of outsourcing business activities

S/No	Organisational Benefits	S/No	Business Benefits
1	Shortens activity development cycles	1	Allows focusing on core activities
2	Improves technologically operations	2	Increases business flexibility
3	Allows access to latest technologies	3	Produce cost savings
4	Reduces training costs	4	Reduces capital expenditure
5	Improves management processes	5	Transfer fixed costs to variables
6	Increases innovation trends	6	Allows to focus on internal business improvement
7	Reduces organisational risks	7	Improves strategic positioning
8	Builds entry barriers for competitors	8	Get rid of problem functions
9	Permit access to skills and talent	9	Legal compliance

Source: Adapted from Ehie (2001) and Kremic, Tukul and Rom (2006)

Decision to explore new business areas

Orgs. E, F, G and H discussed expanding into new business areas. Org. E saw an opportunity for search engine optimisation and amended its business model accordingly. The CEO said, “*with search engine optimisation fast gaining recognition, with an amendment to our business model, we have added this **new service** to our existing list of services.*” By watching the market environment, Org. F noticed two business opportunities and amended its business plan accordingly. Org. F did the necessary in-house training to prepare for the new business opportunities and was confident the next financial year would be better. Org. F’s AGM said “*as additional steps to curtail revenue losses, we added **two new business areas** to our portfolio; back-office support for new and forthcoming stock exchanges in other countries and analytics¹⁰. To keep the **overhead costs low associated with these two new services**, the added new services will be carried out by the **existing employees**. Training for them will be through our principal or subsidiary offices in India.*”

¹⁰ Systematic computational analysis of data.

However, Org. G, being in the industry for over four decades, was accustomed to employing remedial steps to curtail economic crises. The CEO said, *“towards our existence **and sustainability**, focus on a new direction is essential. Energy-saving products for new buildings are now in the market.”* Similarly, Org. H's (CEO) sensed that two new clinics took time to attract customers and expanded into two new business areas as well. The CEO said, *“we trust in **keeping our customers close and treating them well** and, in doing so, recently opened a pharmacy and laboratory. In this way, our customers do not have to go ‘clinic hopping’ for blood tests and prescribed medication. All these **services are served under one roof**. While external customers can obtain our services, our regular customers enjoy **our services at discounted prices**.”*

Diversification leads to an organisation's long-term growth and sustainability by selling new products to the existing customer base or creating new markets. An organisation with a limited product line or service considers diversification as a good step to survive (Santander Corporate and Commercial, 2016; Lewis, 2020). Diversification is a good strategy if the market is strong enough to withstand competitors, the customer pool is small, and/or the operation costs are higher than potential revenue.

Orgs. E, F, G, and H discussed expanding into new business areas. However, Org. A did not seek alternative ways to add new services to extend its business plan, which further constrained its operating costs.

Decisions taken not to adopt any steps

Org. C did not discuss a new product line or an expansion plan. However, Org. C's business plan was based on a 'projectised' basis to keep its costs low. The CEO said, *“since our business model is based on a ‘projectised’ basis, **we do not need a permanent office or staff**, and once a project reaches its maturity, we wind up the project, and assign our employees to other countries. In this way, we pass the **operational costs onto our global partners**.”* By sharing its operational costs with its global partners, Org. C has managed to maintain minimal operating costs.

In summary, detecting organisational particularities in remedial steps taken implied how the organisation survived and sustained itself, and the ways in which these particularities impacted an individual organisation were observed as taking many forms. Orgs. B and H expanded within Bahrain by converting its clinics into polyclinics. Org. G outsourced its production plant to Iran. Org. D benefitted from insourcing steps adopted by large and medium-sized organisations. Additionally, Org. E sub-contracted some of its business needs to freelancers or virtual offices. Similarly, Orgs. E, F, G, and H branched out into new business sectors. Org. C did not impose new remedial steps. Lastly, when detecting organisational particularities in remedial steps taken to survive and sustain which impacted an individual organisation, it was observed that Org. A was unable to look for alternative ways to amend its business plan, and that placed Org. A under severe survival challenges.

4.3.3. Challenges from accepting Tamkeen's financial help

This section shows challenges from accepting Tamkeen's financial help. Complex and lengthy application processes were challenges associated with accepting Tamkeen's financial help. The literature and some organisations reported Tamkeen's practice of charging high interest rates and practising discriminatory attitudes towards the industry.

Lack of awareness

If Tamkeen was more pro-active, it would have served more organisations, a point which was shared by Orgs. A and H: *"if Tamkeen takes a more **pro-active approach** in promoting its services, more organisations will benefit. The only way we knew of its services was through its website. What about organisations that are **not computer-friendly**? How are they going to obtain their services?"* Discussions showed that Tamkeen's former loans benefitted Orgs. B, D, E, G, and H. However, Org. A presumed Tamkeen discriminated against foreign-owned organisations and did neglect to approach Tamkeen for support.

Complex and lengthy loan application process

Orgs. B, D, E, G, and H had benefitted from Tamkeen's loans in the past and shared that the lengthy and complicated loan application process was challenging. Collectively Orgs. B, D, E, G, and H said, *"the application process was quite **lengthy and complex** with a high requirement of collateral support, but overall, **we are satisfied** with Tamkeen's services."*

High interest rates

Orgs. B and H saw Tamkeen's Tamweel+ support as helping organisations expand either at home or abroad. However, organisations would receive significant help if Tamkeen revised its interest rates. Org. B's (CEO) shared thoughts: *"the **high interest rates** compelled us to borrow from relatives."* The rest of the organisations agreed and stated, *"the **high interest** on Tamkeen's loans were **too high** for us to bear. Once the loan is fully paid, we are left with **no savings for our future.**"*

Discriminatory attitude towards the industry

Org. G faced discrimination while seeking a loan from Tamkeen and said, *"funding organisations **favour the high-tech sector, rather than manufacturing** (2.3.1)."* Org. A and the other organisations shared no thoughts in this area.

Due to fragile collateral challenges, SMEs are often challenged with credit regulating and complex interest rates matters (Alrabeei and Kasi, 2014). Comparing SMEs with larger organisations, they are unable to comply with higher disclosure requirements for equity¹¹, loans and bonds. Higher interest rates on loans are concerns for SMEs (Saxena, 2017). During an economic crisis, it is evident that interest rates rise considerably, increasing the debt burden (Sato, 2000). With loan repayment periods being extended, SMEs pay back larger sums. SMEs feel trapped, as any earnings or profits generated are settled on loan repayment, leaving no savings for future growth (Ojeka, 2011). High interest rates lead business leaders to seek funding from venture capital organisations or relatives rather than from banks. The complex loan application process and the lack of transparency are

¹¹ The difference between the value of the assets and the liabilities.

additional drawbacks (Injaz, 2013). Discriminatory attitudes regarding the business sector were an additional challenge.

In summary, the problems when seeking loans involved a complex, lengthy loan application process and high interest rates. The individual's lack of awareness was not a real problem. Detecting organisational particularities and identifying problems encountered when seeking Tamkeen's financial support showed that the overall findings were positive except for the loan application process.

4.3.4. Tender Board's role towards allocation of government's tender quotas

When identifying organisational particularities on the role played by the Tender Board in allocating tender quotas, stakeholders criticised the Tender Board over its tender practices. Critical findings included hidden clauses and a lack of transparency when awarding government tenders.

Lack of transparency allocating government tenders

Marginalising small organisations over large organisations when allocating government tenders was a significant concern for some action learning set participants. Org. A's CEO said, *"I have been in business for the last few years and have **never been successful** even securing part of a tender, but my friends in the **big business circle have been successful** winning government tenders."* Orgs. D, E, and F shared similar opinions and said, *"we often see a **lack of transparency** in granting government tenders. We are concerned that they are secretly awarded to larger organisations (5.2)."*

Clauses associated with awarding government tenders

Orgs. A, D, E, and F were further critical, adding that government tender awards carry hidden clauses, which is evidenced through collective thoughts: *"I feel that the government tenders have **hidden clauses favouring large organisations**."* It was observed that the action learning set felt that the Tender Board was not transparent with its tender allocation, disallowing small organisations in benefitting from government tenders.

A'Ali (2017) said that the Tender Board supports big organisations over small organisations. This challenge was mainly due to the 'inside' information shared before releasing a government tender (5.2). Projects were often not given based on skilled labour and knowledge, but to sectors outside the scope. Another drawback was the lack of transparency in allocating government tenders; SMEs were concerned that they were secretly awarded to larger organisations (Yusuf, 2014).

In summary and agreeing with A'Ali (2017) and Yusuf (2014), detecting organisational particularities on the Tender Board's role towards allocating government's tenders, Orgs. A, D, E, and F presumed that hidden tender clauses prevented small organisations from winning government tenders. Orgs. D, E, and F criticised the Tender Board for not being transparent in tender allocations, often discriminating against small organisations by hindering access to critical tender information. The remaining organisations, due to the type of the industry they operate in, shared no concerns regarding government tenders. (Table 27) shows what organisations A to H did better, worse, or different to adjust to the economic crisis.

Table 27: Detecting organisational particularities

Organisation	4.3.1 The role of failed or stalled government projects	4.3.2 Remedial steps towards survival and sustainability						4.3.3 Challenges from taking Tamkeen's financial help				4.3.4 Tender board's role towards allocation of government's tender quotas	
		Decisions taken to expand within Bahrain	Decisions taken to expand beyond Bahrain	Decisions taken to insource business activities	Decisions taken to outsource business activities	Decision to explore new business areas	Decisions to disregard attractive measures	Lack of awareness	Complex and lengthy loan application process	High interest rates	Discriminatory attitude towards the industry	Lack of transparency allocating government's tenders	Clauses associated with awarding government tenders
Org. A	√	x	√	x	x	x	√	√	x	x	x	√	√
Org. B	x	√	x	x	x	x	x	x	√	√	x	x	x
Org. C	x	x	x	x	x	x	√	x	x	x	x	x	x
Org. D	x	x	x	√	x	x	x	x	√	√	x	√	√
Org. E	x	x	x	x	√	√	x	x	√	√	x	√	√
Org. F	x	x	x	x	x	√	x	x	x	x	x	√	√
Org. G	√	x	√	x	x	√	x	x	√	√	√	x	x
Org. H	x	√	x	x	x	√	x	√	√	√	x	x	x

4.3.5. Concluding remarks associated with detecting organisational particularities (micro-economic conditions)

Reflecting on the discussions with Orgs. A–H, the drop in oil prices and the economic crisis harmed all organisations. The findings showed that the damages to SMEs correlated with the level of dependency on government support. However, it was also observed that the stakeholders' intense reliance on government projects were preventing them from seeking alternative arrangements during an economic crisis.

Except for Org. A, the rest of the organisations imposed survival steps to embrace the economic crisis. Forming business partnerships with comparable businesses and expanding into other sectors helped these organisations to curtail their operational costs (4.3.2). Some action learning set participants saw Tamkeen's loan application process as

complex, lengthy, discriminatory, and favouring the high-tech industry. These organisations regarded the complex loan application process and high interest rates as additional challenges (4.3.3). Additionally, securing a government tender had been a significant challenge for some action learning set participants, and they feared such tenders carried hidden clauses and were awarded either to large organisations or within the known business circles (4.3.4). Additionally, these action learning set participants criticised the Tender Board for being non-transparent when awarding government tenders.

The core advancements in thinking brought about by (4.3) findings showed that except for Org. A, the rest of the action learning set participants imposed several survival steps to sustain themselves and survive this economic crisis. These steps varied according to the business needs and organisation's business model; however, neglecting to impose remedial steps in this economic crisis has not been favourable for Org. A. Due to the type of industry, it operates in, Org. A had several opportunities to impose remedial steps. Product diversification (Santander Corporate and Commercial, 2016; Lewis, 2020) or accepting insourcing business activities were some of the actions Org. A could have explored in its favour (Copeland, 2001; Carmel and Agarwal, 2002). A primary observation through this section was that Org. A presumed that Tamkeen would favour local organisations over foreign-owned organisations (A'Ali, 2017), resulting in neglecting to seek Tamkeen loans. This presumption was once again seen when government tenders were discreetly awarded to big organisations (Yusuf, 2014) or awarded outside the scope. Findings showed that there had been a certain degree of corruption in awarding government tenders (Yusuf, 2014; A'Ali, 2017), but they were not the primary causes for not winning a government tender.

4.4. Chapter summary

Data collected from Orgs. A–H showed that every organisation had faced multiple challenges, but the impact on turnover varied. The findings showed that the problems discussed in this chapter were common across all the organisations, but that changes within the organisations have helped them adapt to the situation. Increased utility charges

were common across all organisations, irrespective of the organisations's ownership and size. Likewise, discrimination when obtaining Tamkeen's loans was experienced to a certain extent, but this was an unimportant cause of revenue losses.

Findings of (4.1) showed the high percentage on Org. A's sales and profit losses cannot be explained by Bahrain's economic crisis alone. (4.2) showed that there were no discriminatory practices from Tamkeen towards foreign-owned organisations operating in Bahrain. Except for Org. A, the rest of the organisations had either benefitted or were aware of Tamkeen's support. Lastly, seeing the problem from the perspective of organisational particularities (4.3), findings showed that there were several challenges across all industries, but the way each organisation handled the challenges was different.

The findings from the action learning set uncovered reasons for Org. A's revenue losses. It was evident that most of the challenges were only encountered within an economic crisis, and only particular areas were actual problems. While other business leaders recognised and responded to the threats, why did Org. A neglect to adapt? Was it due to a lack of ability or skills from the organisation or leadership? These challenges are discussed in detail in chapters (5) and (6).

Chapter 5: Lack of Organisational Knowledge, Competencies, and Self-efficacies

As will be shown through this chapter, one of the primary causes appeared to be due to a lack of organisational knowledge, competencies, and self-efficacies, which resulted in Org. A being unprepared to respond to the economic crisis. Thoughts and opinions from Orgs. A–H and a literature review relating to organisational knowledge, competencies, and self-efficacies helped to compare, contrast, and synthesise other scholars' views to build a theoretical foundation for this DBA research.

Organisational knowledge and its role in ensuring competitiveness of modern socio-economic systems framework, as shown through (Figure 4) and summarised in (2.4), helped to analyse the challenges relating to organisational knowledge, competencies, and self-efficacies within Org. A. This framework suggests that organisations must assess long-term competitive advantages before proposing a solution to a changing environment. Rapid changes lead to identifying frequent internal and external reviews to recognise necessary strategies to bring in improvements to an organisation. Expected competencies by professional IT architects, as discussed in (Table 6), shown in (Figure 13), and summarised in (6.1), strengthened chapter 5's findings.

This chapter is divided into five sections. (5.1) discusses Org. A's CEO's lack of entrepreneurial experience and how it hindered benefitting from the business circle. Likewise, (5.2) discusses how a lack of access to critical information hindered Org. A when attempting to secure government tenders. Similarly, (5.3) addresses Org. A's negligence to evaluate the benefits of external financial support. Additionally, (5.4) analyses Org. A's inability to amend the business plan in line with the economic setting. Lastly, (5.5) addresses Org. A's negligence to react to the crisis.

5.1. Inability to benefit from the business circle

One reason for the inability to benefit from the business circle was the CEO's lack of entrepreneurial experience, which hindered networking with the business circle, and is discussed through (5.1.1). Similarly, (5.1.2) discusses an additional reason for the CEO's

inability to assess the benefits of networking with other business leaders, and lastly, the HR selection processes not linked to organisational development is discussed through (5.1.3).

5.1.1. CEO's lack of entrepreneurial experience hindered networking with the business circle

Findings from (4.3) showed Org. A's CEO showing some inability to network with other business leaders, which hindered it benefitting from the business circle. Data collected showed that a key reason for this inability was due to the CEO being new to the business world and being a foreigner at the same time: *"as a foreigner in Bahrain since 1995, I was networking with employees from my previous or similar organisations. However, I was **not belonging to a business circle**. My challenge is **knowing and connecting** with other business leaders."* These challenges are addressed through (6.1.2).

The biggest challenge a foreigner often lacks in a new country is a social circle (Bird and Wennberg, 2016). Native business leaders usually have a network of friends, business associates, and family members as a primary customer base in the initial stages of the business. However, this facility is not easily available to a foreigner when in a new country. They must start from the beginning in terms of getting to know people.

Thoughtful opinions from the CEOs of Orgs. H and C in this regard were constructive. Org. H stated, *"in the first three years, build a relationship with your customers and let them be your brand ambassadors. **Get closer to them** and visit them often."* Followed by Org. C: *"you must meet and talk to people, to **see what they are doing**, and see what makes them different to you."*

Evaluating the situation with Bird and Wennberg's (2016) findings showed what led to a lack of local network. A significant challenge was Org. A's CEO being a foreigner, and not having the primary customer base in the early stage of Org. A's business. This inability hindered it benefitting from the business circle. Unlike the examples of Orgs. H and C's

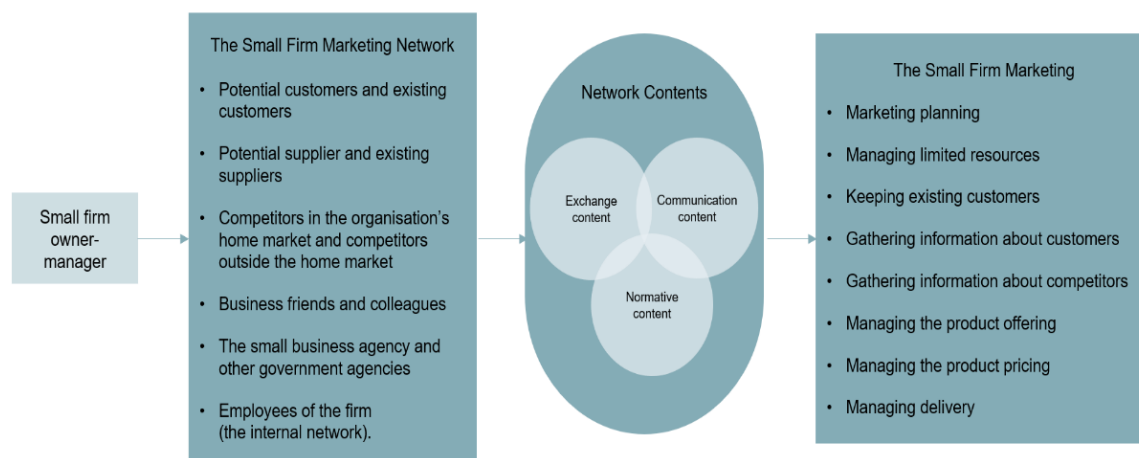
CEOs, Org. A's CEO neglected to attempt to see what other business leaders were doing before launching Org. A, and this hindered it benefitting from the business circle.

5.1.2. CEO's inability to assess the benefits of networking with other business leaders

An additional reason for Org. A's inability to network with other business leaders, which hindered it benefitting from the business circle, was that the CEO did not attempt to see the benefits of networking with other business leaders before becoming an entrepreneur. As evidenced by the CEO's quote: *"I now see the **implications of not attempting to link entrepreneurially** before I became an entrepreneur."* By overlooking this area, building bridges with the business circle has been a continuous challenge for Org. A.

Elfring and Hulsink (2003) see social interactions as excellent sources for an organisation to identify and exploit new business opportunities (Figure 26). In a study carried out by Schoonjans, Van Cauwenberge, and Vander Bauwhede (2013) between 1992 and 2008 across 6,000 Flemish small organisations, it was identified that since small organisations are often ill-equipped with adequate knowledge and resources to adjust to an economic crisis, networking provides an excellent platform to look for solutions. Cronin-Gilmore (2012) highlights that networking events are competitive platforms for small business owners to see how other business leaders build their market segment strategies.

Figure 26: Conceptualisation of the contribution of networking to small firm marketing



Source: Adapted from O'Donnell (2014, p.167)

Analogous to the findings of Elfring and Hulsink (2003), not weighing the benefits of social interactions has hindered Org. A benefiting from a broader business circle. By not taking the opportunities shown by Schoonjans, Van Cauwenberge, and Vander Bauwhede (2013) and Cronin-Gilmore (2012), Org. A neglected to benefit from the resources and solutions from the business circle.

5.1.3. HR selection processes not linked to organisational development

Another reason for Org. A's inability to network with other business leaders, which hindered it benefitting from the business circle, was its employees not seeing the benefits of expanding its client base through networking. This was evidenced through the CEO's quote: *"during the hiring process, preference was given to **knowledge and experience**, and a lesser attention to soft skills."* By overlooking this area, Org. A's employees focused on delivering the assigned tasks at a client's site, but less significant attention was paid to expanding or retaining the client base.

Employees networking with customers build successful relationships and develop mutual respect (Kay, 2004). When employees network with the existing customers, it opens avenues to an insight of future projects and competitor habits. Employees who lack this understanding see no benefit in networking, except for delivering the tasks given. Bhide (1996) says that a lack of talented employees with a good balance of knowledge and skills is often the primary obstacle that hinders implementing a strategy. Bhide's (1996) views are supported by Shepherd, Douglas, and Shanley (2000), who found that competent employees who have an eye for a new venture are an asset for new organisations.

Aligned with Bhide's (1996) findings, Org. A did not face challenges in finding qualified and experienced employees but did find it difficult to find employees with a balance of knowledge and skills. By overlooking this area, similar to Kay's (2004) findings, Org. A's employees were interested in completing a job assigned to them but saw no benefit in acquiring additional business leads from the existing client. Corresponding with

Shepherd, Douglas, and Shanley's (2000) findings, as a new venture, this inability has hindered Org. A in retaining and expanding its customer base.

5.1.4. Concluding remarks related to Org. A's inability to benefit from the business circle

(Table 28) summarises Org. A's inability to network with other business leaders, which hindered it benefitting from the business circle. This table evidences that by not belonging to a business circle, Org. A's CEO displayed a lack of self-confidence related to a fear of uncertainty and feelings of failure. The CEO's self-evaluation was shown to be accurate in that the CEO did not weigh the benefits of connecting entrepreneurially. The inability to form a business circle showed the CEO's inferior competency skills. Giving more preference to work knowledge and less attention to soft skills when selecting the organisation's employees showed the CEO's lack of knowledge on HR selection processes.

Table 28: Summary of inability to benefit from the business circle

Organisational knowledge	Key concepts	Yes	No	Competency skills	Key Concepts	Yes	No	Self-efficacy	Key Concepts	Yes	No
	People's knowledge	–	–		Skills	–	✓		Self-confidence	–	✓
	Strategic knowledge	–	–		Knowledge	–	✓		Accurate self-evaluation	✓	–
	Theoretical knowledge	–	–		Self-concept	–	–		Willingness to take risks	–	–
	Practical knowledge	–	–		Traits	–	–		Sense of accomplishment	–	–
	Process knowledge	–	–		Motives	–	–		Fear of risks	–	–
	Subject domain knowledge	–	–						Fear of uncertainty	✓	–
									Feelings of failure	✓	–
									Impression management	–	–

In sum, three factors contributed to Org. A's inability to network with other business leaders, which hindered it benefitting from the business circle. Org. A's CEO, being new to the business world and being a foreigner at the same time, had no previous entrepreneurial experience and therefore appeared to lack understanding of the entrepreneurial culture. Additionally, the CEO did not attempt to see the benefits of networking with other business leaders before becoming an entrepreneur, which has not been favourable for Org. A. Lastly, during the employee selection process, giving

preference to knowledge over soft skills hindered the hiring of candidates with a mixture of knowledge and skills. (6.1) shows these skills from an individual perspective.

The core advancements in thinking brought about by (5.1) findings showed the importance of networking with other business leaders and how it can help small organisations (Cronin-Gilmore, 2012), especially if the business owner is a foreigner and new to the business world (Bird and Wennberg, 2016). This section also showed that networking should not be limited to generate business opportunities (Elfring and Hulsink, 2003) but should look for every opportunity to expand the network. Lastly, it also showed that networking is not limited to the business owner only. Every member of the organisation should know how to develop the circle and the benefits that networking can generate (Bhide, 1996; Shepherd, Douglas, and Shanley, 2000; Kay, 2004).

The following section (5.2) identifies when an organisation lacks ‘inside’ information and how it will be marginalised when attempting to secure government tenders.

5.2. Lack of access to critical information

Sections’ (4.3.4) and (6.1.3) findings showed that Org. A lacked ‘inside’ information, resulting in it being marginalised when attempting to secure government tenders. Org. A neglected to devote adequate efforts to discovering enough information on government tenders by attending networking events, ‘Majlis’ open houses or even by paying regular visits to the government offices. As said by the CEO: *“securing a government tender or a sub-contract has been a significant challenge for us. A considerable challenge was due to ‘inside’ information before the tender is released. Tenders are awarded based on personal relationships, paying low attention to project skills or knowledge we can provide.”* The reasons relating to Org. A’s lack of access to ‘inside’ information when securing a government tender or a sub-contract will be shown through this section.

5.2.1. Not taking the initiative to visit the Tender Board

A key reason for Org. A lacking ‘inside’ information, resulting in it being marginalised when attempting to secure government tenders, was due to not taking the initiative to visit the

Tender Board regularly. Shown by the CEO's quote: "*we thought that visits to the Tender Board were through invitation, and **never knew that every organisation had this opportunity.***" This inability was further evidenced through the OM's quote: "*we do read daily newspapers for government tender openings, but we see only limited announcements from selected government offices.*" All tender announcements may not be public, but all tender awards are made public, and the fact that the organisation was not aware of this was stated by the OM: "*we **never knew that government tender openings are open to the public.***" Not being proactive by visiting the Tender Board frequently resulted in Org. A losing critical government tender announcements.

McKinsey and Company, through their online survey sent to 1,167 business leaders between 17 and 30 November 2009, showed that government actions impact an organisation's existence (Dua, Heil, and Wilkins, 2010). However, this survey also showed that this depends on an organisation's practice of managing its relationship with the government, which is defined as less robust than managing relationships with other stakeholders. This survey also showed that the participants were not good at engaging with the government, and that even though there were several practices for an organisation to manage its relationship with the government, they were not efficiently executed, and this was mainly due to the executive's views on the government offices.

Analogous to the work of Dua, Heil, and Wilkins (2010), this showed that by not visiting the Tender Board regularly, Org. A missed critical tender announcements. Aligned with these findings, this was partly due to the CEO's views on government offices, which largely contributed towards missing information. However, compared to this survey information, Org. A was small and new, and this meant that it was disadvantaged in securing government tenders to some extent (4.3.4), but this inability was mainly linked to not making the initial attempt to visit and develop a relationship with the Tender Board, resulting in it being marginalised when attempting to secure government tenders.

5.2.2. Inability to pre-qualify with the government offices

An additional reason for Org. A lacking 'inside' information, resulting in it being marginalised when attempting to secure government tenders, was not being able to pre-qualify with the Tender Board or with the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI). Instead, Org. A's CEO placed a high level of confidence in expecting only professional qualifications or years of practical experience to add value to a tender and expected that it would be called in to participate. This high level of confidence has resulted, in practice, in not being invited for government tenders. This misplaced confidence is heard through the CEO's quote: *"I thought **by default**, based on our service category and employee qualifications, **we were by default short-listed as potential tenderers**. I never knew that organisations **must initially register and pre-qualify** with the Tender Board or Chamber of Commerce and Industry."* Not attempting to qualify as a potential tenderer with BTB or BCCI has not been favourable for Org. A in that it did not receive government tender information.

Additionally, BCCI's log-in access allows organisations to evaluate competitors' past tender practices and pricing decisions. By not pre-qualifying, Org. A missed this opportunity to learn tender writing skills and tender onboarding strategies. This was shown through the OM's quote: *"by **not registering** with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, we **missed numerous opportunities** to study competitor tender pricing strategies and tender writing skills."* Neglecting to carry out measures to step into the 'tender world', and instead waiting for 'inside' information, was not favourable for Org. A.

Registering through the BCCI system allows small and medium-sized organisations to receive the classification certificate and cabinet decisions on government tenders (BCCI, 2019). Perry (2011) reports that many small organisations can participate in public tenders, but fear or ignorance of the process hinders this ability. Also, a lack of awareness of and familiarity with government offices' frameworks are additional challenges for small organisations. Time constraints and qualified personnel required to source contracts are other drawbacks.

Aligned with the work of Perry (2011), by not being pro-active in registering with the BCCI, either due to fear or ignorance of the tendering processes, Org. A was being marginalised when attempting to secure government tenders. Analogous with the BCCI (2019) guidelines, by not registering with the BCCI, Org. A was hindered in receiving cabinet decisions on government tender announcements. Added significant factors, similar to the findings of Perry (2011), were time constraints and its employees' lack of experience and knowledge on government tenders, hindering its ability to access 'inside' information.

5.2.3. Org. A's inability to meet fellow successful tenderers

Sections' (5.1.1) and (5.1.2) findings showed an additional example whereby Org. A lacked 'inside' information, resulting in it being marginalised when attempting to secure government tenders, which was due to not attempting to meet fellow tenderers who had won past government tenders. As evidenced by the CEO: *"I have heard that there are weekly 'Majlis' or open houses held by other business leaders. I thought that they were accessible **by invitation only** and were **only for local or GCC nationals** who speak Arabic."* Org. A's inability to look for information on how to attend these weekly 'Majlis' or open houses to meet fellow business leaders meant it missed several discussion opportunities on past government tenders.

Information received through a tight-knit network carries credibility than when it is received from an 'arm's length' point of view (Uzzi, 1999). This saves time and money for new organisations (Aldrich and Zimmer, 1986). Peer learning is an added advantage, allowing small business owners to trust their network for support and encouragement to overcome obstacles (Pages and Garmise, 2003).

Corresponding with the work of Pages and Garmise (2003), by not attempting to meet fellow tenderers who had won past government tenders, tender learning skills for Org. A has been a continuous learning journey. Relating to the findings of Uzzi (1999) and Aldrich and Zimmer (1986), this has hindered Org. A from receiving credible advice from fellow business leaders. Aligned with the work of Pages and Garmise (2003), by not trusting the

business network for encouragement and support, Org. A was further marginalised when attempting to secure government tenders.

5.2.4. Concluding remarks associated with lack of access to critical information

In summary, as seen in (Table 29), by not being pro-active in visiting the Tender Board, Org. A displayed a lack of practical knowledge. Impression management was evidenced by assuming that organisations by default were short-listed as potential tenderers (self-efficacy). Neglecting to register with the government offices as a potential tenderer once again showed a lack of practical knowledge to meet the conditions for government tendering. Additional findings were that a lack of skills prevented it benefitting from the business circle (competency skills).

Table 29: Summary of lack of access to critical information

Organisational knowledge	Key concepts	Yes	No	Competency skills	Key Concepts	Yes	No	Self-efficacy	Key Concepts	Yes	No
	People's knowledge	--	--		Skills	--	✓		Self-confidence	--	--
	Strategic knowledge	--	--		Knowledge	--	--		Accurate self-evaluation	--	--
	Theoretical knowledge	--	--		Self-concept	--	--		Willingness to take risks	--	--
	Practical knowledge	--	✓		Traits	--	--		Sense of accomplishment	--	--
	Process knowledge	--	--		Motives	--	--		Fear of risks	--	--
	Subject domain knowledge	--	--						Fear of uncertainty	--	--
									Feelings of failure	--	--
									Impression management	✓	--

In summary, four factors contributed to Org. A missing 'inside' information, resulting in it being marginalised when attempting to secure government tenders. Firstly, Org. A did not attempt to visit the Tender Board regularly. Furthermore, by not pre-qualifying with the Tender Board and Chamber of Commerce, Org. A did miss receiving government tender announcements. Moreover, neglecting to see the benefits of learning from fellow successful tenderers prevented Org. A from learning the tender culture. Lastly, the CEO's inability to spend enough effort in attending weekly 'Majlis' of other business leaders did not generate positive results for Org. A. This collective evidence hindered Org. A having access to critical information, resulting in it being marginalised when attempting to secure government tenders.

The core advancements in thinking brought about by (5.2) findings showed several factors contributing to why an organisation would be marginalised when securing government tenders. One primary reason was neglecting to visit the primary government offices that publish tender announcements (Dua, Heil, and Wilkins, 2010; Perry, 2011; BCCI, 2019). The next reason was neglecting to learn from fellow tenderers (Aldrich and Zimmer, 1986; Uzzi, 1999; Pages and Garmise, 2003), especially if you are new to the business and tender worlds. Another way to learn tender culture was from the business circle (Aldrich and Zimmer, 1986; Uzzi, 1999; Pages and Garmise, 2003).

The next section (5.3) shows that when an organisation neglects to benefit from external financial support, this will threaten its survival and sustainability.

5.3. Inability to benefit from external financial support

Neglecting to weigh the benefits of external financial support has not been favourable for Org. A. In order to survive and sustain itself, having external financial support, at least until the economic situation improves, is important. (4.2.1) showed this importance through (Figure 22). However, Org. A's CEO saw external financial support as a burden, evidencing: *"in this economic crisis **we are reluctant to apply for loans, fearing payback.**"* With a disruptive business pipeline and an economic crisis, fearing payback, Org. A saw no benefit of asking for external financial support. This section addresses other reasons behind this inability to recognise such benefit.

5.3.1. Lack of support given to foreign-owned organisations

One reason for Org. A being unable to realise the benefits of external financial support to sustain itself and survive, as addressed through (4.2.2), was presuming because it is foreign-owned that Tamkeen will discriminate when extending help. As heard from the CEO: *"being 100% foreign-owned, **we are not sure we will receive fair treatment in getting our loans approved.**"* With not having collateral assets in the form of vehicles, land, or equipment, Org. A feared applying for loans (4.3.3). This was shown through the CEO's quote: *"with our **limited collateral assets, meeting payback prevented us from seeking external financial support.**"* Org. A presumed that being foreign-owned and

having limited collateral assets prevented it from benefitting from Tamkeen's support to survive and sustain itself.

Small organisations, compared to bigger organisations, are unable to meet with higher disclosure needs for equity, loans, and bonds. Higher interest rates on loans also worry small organisations (Saxena, 2017). They feel trapped, as any earnings or profits made are re-invested on loan repayment, leaving no savings for the future. Fragile collateral matters often challenge SMEs with credit regulating challenges and complex interest rates (Alrabeei and Kasi, 2014).

Section (4.3.3) findings showed that no discriminatory practices were hindering foreign-owned organisations benefitting from Tamkeen's support. However, analogous to the work of Alrabeei and Kasi (2014), Org. A presumed that by being foreign-owned and with limited collateral assets, the government would discriminate against it in not approving its loans. Aligned with the findings of Saxena (2017), since Org. A did not ask for loans, there were no discussions based on high interest rates or complex loan application processes.

5.3.2. Org. A's inability to benefit from Tamkeen's coaching and mentoring

An additional reason for Org. A's inability to benefit from Tamkeen's financial support was not seeing the value of Tamkeen's coaching and mentoring, as addressed through (4.2.6). This was shown by the CEO's quote: *"we thought that Tamkeen's coaching and mentoring workshops were for **locally-owned** or for big organisations"*. By assuming that Tamkeen's coaching and mentoring workshops were only for locally-owned organisations, Org. A did not benefit from guidance extended on loan support.

Skills transfer and training in business acumen through mentoring and coaching is essential for small and medium-sized organisations (Van Coller-Peter and Cronjé, 2020). Despite the similarities between coaching and mentoring, both contribute towards the development of the organisation. Bell (2014) says that for business owners who lack external learning, coaching is an ideal platform to unlock the learning ability. One potential benefit of coaching is its ability to create a learning context that prepares entrepreneurs

to look for quick solutions while also solving the problem and any future ones on their own (Audet and Couteret, 2012).

5.3.3. Concluding remarks related to Org. A's inability to benefit from external financial support

(Table 30) shows that Org. A feared risks associated with government loans (self-efficacy). Assuming that the government will be discriminatory as Org. A is foreign-owned showed a lack of knowledge on impression management (self-efficacy). These assumptions revealed a lack of subject domain knowledge on government matters. Neglecting to benefit from Tamkeen's coaching and mentoring once again showed a lack of subject domain knowledge on government matters.

Table 30: Summary of inability to benefit from external financial help

Organisational knowledge	Key concepts	Yes	No	Competency skills	Key Concepts	Yes	No	Self-efficacy	Key Concepts	Yes	No
	People's knowledge	–	–		Skills	–	–		Self-confidence	–	–
	Strategic knowledge	–	–		Knowledge	–	–		Accurate self-evaluation	–	–
	Theoretical knowledge	–	–		Self-concept	–	–		Willingness to take risks	–	–
	Practical knowledge	–	–		Traits	–	–		Sense of accomplishment	–	–
	Process knowledge	–	–		Motives	–	–		Fear of risks	✓	–
	Subject domain knowledge	–	✓						Fear of uncertainty	–	–
									Feelings of failure	–	–
									Impression management	✓	–

In summary, two factors triggered Org. A to not benefit from external financial support. One reason was presuming that as Org. A is foreign-owned, with no collateral assets in its favour, it neglected to ask for Tamkeen's help. An additional inability was failing to seek Tamkeen's coaching and mentoring given to the industry, which hindered guidance on loan applications.

The core advancements in thinking brought about by (5.3) findings showed the benefits of seeking external financial support in an economic crisis. The consequences of presuming that funding organisations would favour specific sectors and neglecting to visit them in person will not be favourable for an organisation (Alrabeei and Kasi (2014). This

section also showed the benefits of coaching and mentoring, and how it can help organisations benefit from external financial support in an economic crisis (Audet and Couteret, 2012; Bell, 2014; Van Coller-Peter and Cronjé, 2020).

The next section (5.4) shows the consequences of an organisation's inability to amend its business plan in an economic crisis.

5.4. Neglecting to amend the business plan in line with the economic setting

By not amending its business plan in line with the economic setting, Org. A experienced loss of sales and profits. Therefore, the question lies in why Org. A has not amended its business plan in line with the economic setting, which is addressed through the following sections.

5.4.1. Org. A's inability to amend its business plan in line with the economic setting

One reason for Org. A's inability to amend its business plan in line with the economic setting was due to its lack of knowledge on how to diversify and reduce risks. Org. A began its operations in Bahrain in 2008, and in that year, Org. A secured two large government projects that ensured work for five to seven years. In hindsight, the leadership realised that this strategy did not consider an economic crisis as can be seen by the CEO's quote: *"government projects were our **main income pipeline** to secure our sustainability for a lengthy period."* This resulted in Org. A being too dependent on government projects and neglecting to pay adequate attention to private sector customers when drafting its business plan.

(Figure 23) and (Figure 24) showed that winning a big customer at an early stage of a business is a big boost for a small organisation. An early success gives much-needed financial stability and promotes the organisation's reputation. However, such a boost carries its drawbacks as well; the eagerness to 'win big' overlooks the potential damages of relying on one or a few clients (Khosla, 2012). Over-dependence on a single client can mean an organisation is just one step away from disaster (Spence, 2015). Truesdell

(2017) highlights that during a loss of market share or sensing a competitor strategy, an organisation must seriously consider revising its business plan.

Aligned with Khosla's (2012) and Spence's (2015) findings, winning government projects at an early stage gave Org. A the much-needed security towards its initial success. This over-reliance neglected to identify the concerns associated with an over-dependence on a single customer. The initial success Org. A achieved by winning government projects meant that it failed to identify the risks of not growing its customer base beyond government customers. Analogous to the findings of Truesdell (2017), by over-relying on government projects and not incorporating mandatory components into its business plan and by not expanding its client base beyond government projects, Org. A experienced significant risks when the government stalled its projects.

5.4.2. Org. A's inability to explore the consequences with an early expansion beyond Bahrain

An added reason for Org. A's inability to amend its business plan in line with the economic setting was due to a lack of knowledge on how to diversify and reduce risks before expanding into Saudi Arabia. As heard from the CEO: *"having secured government projects at an early stage gave us the confidence to look beyond Bahrain, and through this mind-set, **within two years, we expanded our wings to Saudi Arabia.**"* A lack of knowledge and neglecting to amend its business plan in line with the economic setting meant Org. A was unable to consider the risks associated with an early expansion.

Furthermore, expansion plans within two years beyond Bahrain were not in the initial business plan, and this was seen from the CEO's quote: *"keeping the **initial success** in mind of having secured government projects in Bahrain, we were eager to move to Saudi Arabia."* However, it took time to realise that not having carried out a feasibility study before moving to Saudi Arabia was a miscalculation on Org. A's part, and this is evidenced by the CEO: *"we should have carried out a **market survey** before we moved to Saudi Arabia."* Org. A was unable to carry out a feasibility study before moving into Saudi Arabia, which placed further strains on its operating costs.

Corresponding with Khosla's (2012) and Truesdell's (2017) findings, winning government projects at an early stage encouraged Org. A to expand into Saudi Arabia. However, similar to Spence's (2015) findings, neglecting to carry out a feasibility study before moving into Saudi Arabia and revise its business plan in line with the economic setting further strained Org. A's operating costs.

5.4.3. Hiring new employees during an economic slow down

One other added reason for Org. A's inability to amend its business plan in line with the economic setting was due to its lack of knowledge on how to diversify and reduce risks by hiring new employees to its Saudi Arabia's office (6.2.2). Evident from the CEO's quote: "*hiring new employees to our Saudi Arabia's office **took a heavy toll** on our operating costs.*" By not weighing the risks associated and hiring employees during an economic crisis before moving to Saudi Arabia and revising the business plan in line with the economic setting, this has placed a significant constraint on Org. A's operating costs.

Aligned with Spence's (2015) and Truesdell's (2017) findings, not amending its business plan in line with the economic setting and hiring new employees for its Saudi Arabia's office during an economic crisis placed significant constraints on Org. A's operating costs.

5.4.4. Concluding remarks relating to neglecting to amend the business plan in line with the economic setting

(Table 31) and (4.3.1) findings show that by being too dependent on government projects and due to its lack of knowledge on how to diversify and reduce risks, Org. A neglected to pay adequate attention to private sector customers when drafting its business plan. This showed a lack of strategic knowledge (competency skills) needed to revise a business plan in line with the economic setting.

Table 31: Summary of business plan not aligned with the economic setting

Organisational knowledge	Key concepts	Yes	No	Competency skills	Key Concepts	Yes	No	Self-efficacy	Key Concepts	Yes	No
	People's knowledge	–	–		Skills	–	–		Self-confidence	–	–
	Strategic knowledge	–	✓		Knowledge	–	✓		Accurate self-evaluation	–	–
	Theoretical knowledge	–	–		Self-concept	–	–		Willingness to take risks	–	–
	Practical knowledge	–	–		Traits	–	–		Sense of accomplishment	–	–
	Process knowledge	–	–		Motives	–	–		Fear of risks	–	–
	Subject domain knowledge	–	–						Fear of uncertainty	–	–
									Feelings of failure	–	–
									Impression management	–	–

In conclusion, three factors prevented Org. A from revising its business plan. The first reason was over-dependence on government projects and the inability to look at the consequences of over-reliance on a single customer and not expanding the customer base beyond government projects. Furthermore, not seeing the consequences of expanding into Saudi Arabia during an economic crisis further constrained Org. A's operating costs. Lastly, hiring new employees for the Saudi Arabia office and neglecting to consider the associated risks of not having a steady income pipeline further constrained its operating costs.

The core advancements in thinking brought about by (5.4) findings showed that neglecting to seek customers beyond government projects and depending on a single large customer is one step away from disaster (Khosla, 2012; Spence, 2015; Truesdell, 2017). The importance of drawing up a feasibility plan before an expansion, especially during an economic crisis, is mandatory (Spence, 2015). This section also showed the consequences of rushing into opening new offices in an economic crisis and that hiring new employees would impact an organisation's operating costs (Spence, 2015; Truesdell, 2017).

The next section (5.5) shows the consequences of neglecting to react to an economic crisis.

5.5. Neglecting to react to the crisis

By neglecting to respond to the crisis, Org. A was unable to identify the risks associated with operating in an economic crisis. Therefore, the question, as similarly addressed in (5.4), is, why did Org. A neglect to react to the economic crisis? This is seen from multiple aspects.

5.5.1. Neglecting to calculate the underlying costs associated with an early expansion

One reason for Org. A's inability to respond to the economic crisis was due to its lack of knowledge to calculate the costs associated with an early expansion. This inability, as shown through (5.4.2) and (5.4.3) findings, of not seeing the consequences of an early expansion and hiring new employees for its Saudi Arabia's office showed the inability to identify underlying risks with an early expansion (5.4.3). As heard through the CEO's quote: "*within two years of starting our business in Bahrain, **we expanded** our wings to Saudi Arabia.*" Another neglected area was hiring new employees for its Saudi Arabia's office: "*we **hired new employees** to our Saudi Arabia's office.*" By neglecting to react to the economic crisis, and deciding to move into Saudi Arabia, Org. A failed to address the risks associated with an early expansion.

In good times, risk is often overlooked (Simons, 1999). Optimism grows when markets grow, leading to higher returns. Organisations are eager to hire new employees and enhance the scale of opportunities for growth. However, it is in good times that managers need to be watchful for approaching dangers. These times have a mysterious way of setting an organisation up for trouble. These hidden risks are not only external sources, regulators, or competitors, but can be within the organisation itself. Simons (1999) further explains how the risk exposure calculator identifies the pressure points of an organisation to quantify the increased risks. This calculator identifies the level of international competition and the operational expansion speed. Based on an organisation's management style and environment, the amount of pressure on each point can either be low or high. A high score indicates that the organisation is exposed to higher levels of risks, requiring immediate remedial actions.

Aligned with Simons' (1999) work, by having only considered the market growth and being eager to hire new employees when moving into Saudi Arabia, Org. A neglected to evaluate the pressure points before such a move. This resulted in overlooking the need to calculate the underlying risks related to an early expansion.

5.5.2. Org. A's inability to adopt a course of action to minimise damaging influences

Analysing chapters (4) and (5) findings, they showed that Org. A's CEO's lack of knowledge resulted in it failing to adopt a course of action to minimise the negative impact of an economic crisis, which is discussed through this section.

One reason for Org. A not adopting a course of action to minimise damaging influences was due to its lack of knowledge to address the drop in oil prices in its business plan (Ulhaq, 2017). Instead of addressing this key element, Org. A presumed that the oil prices in 2008 would remain unchanged and it did not consider alternative options if there are future drops in oil prices. This meant that Org. A projected that the business was growing, but in reality, and as shown in (4.1.1), the drop in oil prices contributed to revenue losses.

An additional reason for Org. A not adopting a course of action to minimise damaging influences was due to its lack of knowledge to balance the operating costs when client payments were late. As a business owner, and as discussed in (4.1.3), Org. A's CEO's inability to understand that late payments were a cultural norm (Fahy, 2017, Young, 2018) and neglecting to implement a holistic plan on how it can absorb the impact when payments are late further constrained its operating costs.

One other reason for Org. A not adopting a course of action to minimise damaging influences was due to its lack of knowledge regarding identifying the risks when government projects are withdrawn or stalled (BNA, 2015; MEED, 2018). This meant that Org. A overlooked the risks of not building a customer base beyond government projects when it was stable with such projects. Over-dependence and the inability to expand the customer base beyond government projects, as shown in (4.3.1), meant Org. A neglected

to identify the influence of the government deciding to stall large and new infrastructure projects worth over US\$350–400 million. This inability to calculate the associated risks and over-dependence on government projects severely disrupted its primary income.

Lastly, a further area overlooked by Org. A in not adopting a course of action to minimise influences was due to its lack of knowledge in being able to identify how it could continue with declining operating cost. This inability, as shown in (4.3.2), was due to Org. A's CEO presuming that Tamkeen's support was only for locally-owned or large organisations, thus not realising that Tamkeen supports all organisations regardless of ownership and size. This added further constraints to its operating costs.

In an economic crisis, small businesses must pay closer attention to crisis management efforts (Herbane, 2010). By not adopting a course of action in challenging times, 80% of small businesses go out of business within two years of a challenging event (Penrose, 2000). However, organisations with good crisis management plans recover twice as quickly as organisations without a plan (Fink, 1986). A survey by the Bank of Scotland in 2003 across the UK showed that two million small businesses were not prepared to deal with natural or criminal disasters. Another study across 1,000 SME owner-managers said 49% of organisations did not have a crisis management plan in place to deal with threats. A study by AXA claimed 46% of organisations did not consider having a plan to deal with an economic crisis (The Economist, 2005). Moreover, a survey by the Chartered Management Institute (CMI) across small organisations in the UK found that only 40% of organisations had a business continuity plan, showing a proactive desire to address recovery efforts in an economic crisis (Woodman, 2006).

Aligned with Penrose's (2000) and The Economist's (2005) findings, by not addressing the underlying challenges associated with an economic crisis, Org. A neglected to address the destructive influences. Similar to the findings of Woodman (2006) and Fink (1986), overlooking the fundamental aspects of implementing a crisis management plan to address the underlying challenges of an economic crisis, and moving into a new territory, has placed severe constraints on Org. A.

(Table 32) shows Org. A's inability to investigate the means of operating in an economic crisis, and this showed a lack of strategic knowledge in neglecting to react to such a crisis. The inability to adopt a course of action to minimise the influence showed a lack of knowledge in executing such a plan.

Table 32: Summary of neglecting to react to the crisis

Organisational knowledge	Key concepts	Yes	No	Competency skills	Key Concepts	Yes	No	Self-efficacy	Key Concepts	Yes	No
	People's knowledge	--	--		Skills	--	--		Self-confidence	--	--
	Strategic knowledge	--	✓		Knowledge	--	✓		Accurate self-evaluation	--	--
	Theoretical knowledge	--	--		Self-concept	--	--		Willingness to take risks	--	--
	Practical knowledge	--	--		Traits	--	--		Sense of accomplishment	--	--
	Process Knowledge	--	--		Motives	--	--		Fear of risks	--	--
	Subject domain knowledge	--	--						Fear of uncertainty	--	--
									Feelings of failure	--	--
									Impression management	--	--

5.5.3. Concluding remarks associated with neglecting to react to the crisis

In summary, several factors showed Org. A's inability to react to the economic crisis. Firstly, by not responding to the economic crisis in a timely manner, Org. A did not calculate the underlying risks associated with an early expansion. (4.1.1) findings showed that by assuming that the oil prices in 2008 would remain unchanged and neglecting to consider the June 2014 drop in oil prices in its business plan, Org. A failed to show its actual revenue losses. An additional underlying challenge was not implementing a holistic strategy to address how it could absorb the influence of overdue client payments. One other reason was over-dependence on government projects and neglecting to calculate the risks associated when government projects are withdrawn, and not attempting to expand the client base beyond government customers. Lastly, not seeking Tamkeen's help to sustain itself and presuming that such help is only for locally-owned and big organisations hindered its progress.

The core advancements in thinking brought about by (5.5) findings showed several influences of neglecting to react to the crisis. Timely response to an economic crisis is mandatory (Fink; 1986; Herbane, 2000; Penrose, 2000; The Economist, 2005; Woodman, 2006). This section also showed the extent of calculating underlying risks in an expansion

(Simons, 1999). Likewise, the section also demonstrated the importance of considering cyclical crises (Ulhaq, 2017) when drafting business plans and that neglecting to do so will result in false information (Penrose, 2000; The Economist, 2005; Woodman, 2006). This section also showed how vital it is to imply a holistic strategy to absorb the impact of overdue client payments (Fahy, 2017, Young, 2018). An additional finding was the consequences of neglecting to calculate the risks associated with government projects being withdrawn (BNA, 2015; MEED, 2018). Finally, this section also showed that an organisation must approach the primary funding organisations until the situation improves (A'Ali, 2017; Saxena, 2017).

This section ends by summarising the overall findings (5.6) shown in this chapter.

5.6. Chapter summary

The overall findings of this chapter as shown through (Table 33) were that Org. A scored low on strategic and practical knowledge. A lack of subject domain knowledge was observed as well. Skills and knowledge showed low competencies. Impression management was observed, especially on government matters. Fear of uncertainty and fear of risks were also felt during the discussions. Overall findings from (5.1) to (5.5) are summarised through this section. Summarised paragraphs below onwards (*n*) indicate a point alongside each key competency.

Table 33: Overall summary of organisational knowledge, competency skills, and self-efficacy

Organisational knowledge	Key concepts	Yes	No	Competency skills	Key Concepts	Yes	No	Self-efficacy	Key Concepts	Yes	No
	People's knowledge	–	–		Skills	–	2		Self-confidence	–	1
	Strategic knowledge	–	4		Knowledge	–	3		Accurate self-evaluation	1	–
	Theoretical knowledge	–	–		Self-concept	–	–		Willingness to take risks	–	–
	Practical knowledge	–	3		Traits	–	–		Sense of accomplishment	–	–
	Process knowledge	–	–		Motives	–	–		Fear of risks	1	–
	Subject domain knowledge	–	1						Fear of uncertainty	1	–
									Feelings of failure	1	–
									Impression management	2	–

Identifying what Org. A lacked showed that it had less 'inside' information, resulting in it being marginalised when attempting to secure government tenders. It also showed that

one reason for not securing government tenders was due to not taking the initiative to visit the Tender Board (n=1=practical knowledge). Another reason for not securing government tenders was Org. A's CEO placing a high level of confidence in expecting only professional qualifications would add value to win a government tender (n=1=impression management), and this resulted in not qualifying with the relevant government offices (n=1=practical knowledge). Lastly, an additional reason for not securing government was neglecting to seek advice from fellow tenderers who have won past tenders, and this inability further marginalised Org. A when attempting to acquire government tenders (n=1=competency skills).

Fear of risks (n=1=fear of risks), (n=1=fear of uncertainty), (n=1=feelings of failure) associated with government loans prevented Org. A asking for Tamkeen's support (n=1=accurate self-evaluation). One other reason not to ask for Tamkeen's financial support was Org. A presuming that as it is foreign-owned, Tamkeen would discriminate against it (n=1=impression management). An added inability was neglecting to benefit from Tamkeen's coaching and mentoring, which would have guided Org. A to apply for loans (n=1=subject domain knowledge).

Likewise, Org. A's CEO's lack of knowledge (n=1=knowledge) meant that it did not revise its business plan (n=1=knowledge) to diversify and reduce risks (n=1=strategic knowledge) in an economic crisis. Furthermore, the CEO's lack of knowledge (n=1=knowledge) resulted in not identifying the risks before expanding into Saudi Arabia (n=1=strategic knowledge). An added risk was hiring employees for Saudi Arabia's office (n=1=strategic knowledge) in an economic crisis.

Lastly, (5.4) and (5.5) findings showed that Org. A's CEO's lack of knowledge (n=1=knowledge) meant that it did not react to an economic crisis to minimise risks. A further reason for the failure to react was neglecting to calculate the underlying challenges in an economic crisis; it was eager to move into Saudi Arabia and hire new employees as well (n=1=strategic knowledge) and (n=1=lack of self-confidence). Another finding due to Org. A's CEO's lack of knowledge meant Org. A's inability to absorb the drop in oil prices

in its business plan (n=1=practical knowledge). One important finding was Org. A's over-dependence on government projects, neglecting to expand its client base beyond government projects (n=1=strategic knowledge). Lastly, by not reacting to the economic crisis, Org. A neglected to address the declining operating costs or identify ways to survive and sustain itself (n=1=strategic knowledge).

The next chapter addresses how organisational knowledge, competencies, and self-efficacies within Org. A's leadership hindered it from being prepared to respond to the economic crisis.

Chapter 6: Identifying Organisational Knowledge, Leadership

Competencies and Self-efficacies within the leadership

The findings in chapter (5) showed that the observed problems in Org. A seem to relate to a certain lack of organisational knowledge, competencies or self-efficacies. This chapter therefore will analyse further how organisational knowledge, competencies and self-efficacies within the organisation's leadership hindered Org. A from being prepared to respond to the economic crisis.

This chapter is divided into two sections. (6.1) discusses organisational knowledge from the Org. A's CEO's perspective, and (6.2) addresses leadership competencies and self-efficacies within the leadership.

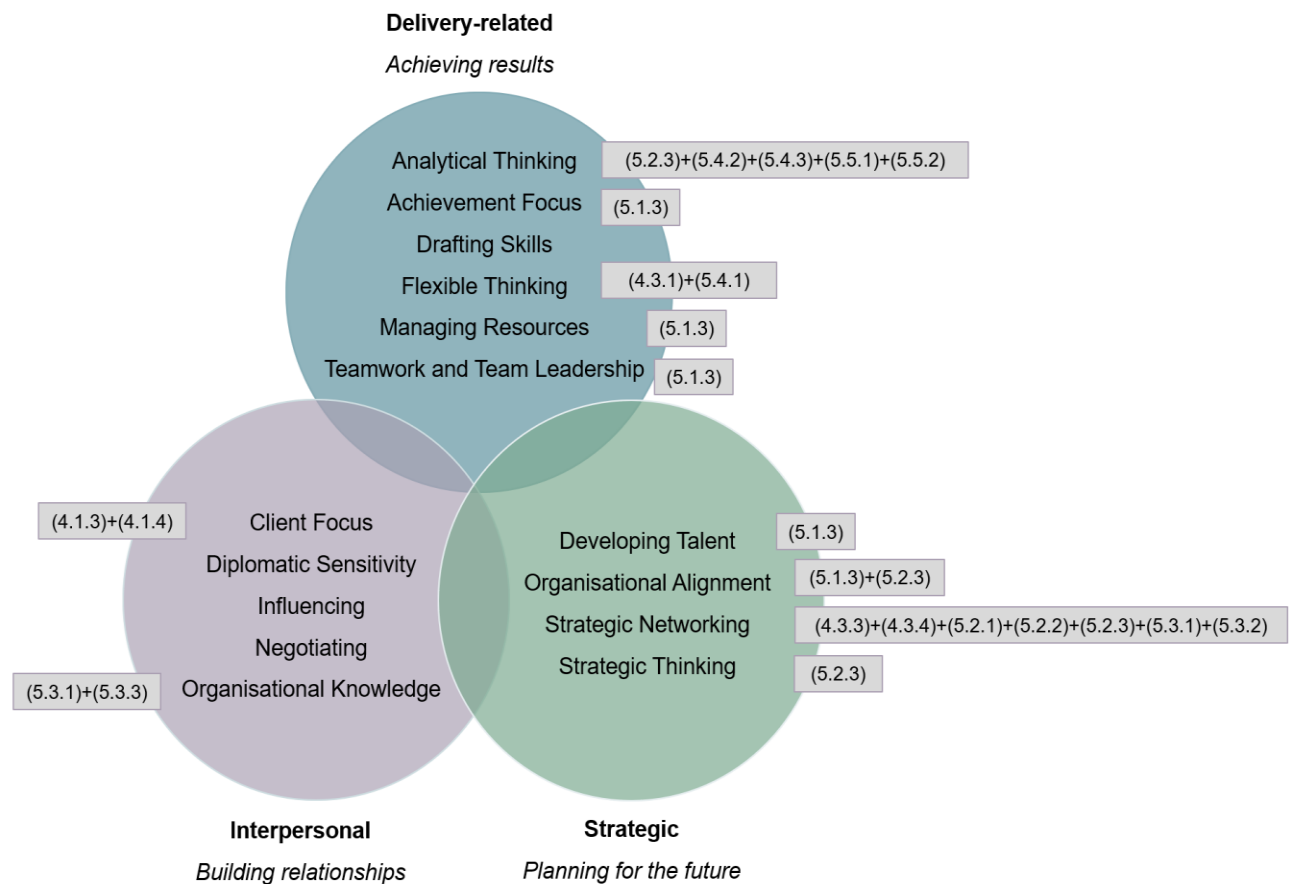
6.1. Organisational knowledge from Org. A CEO's perspective

(Figure 4) analysed chapter (5) findings relating to organisational knowledge and is summarised in (2.4). A summary of organisational knowledge traits compiled into one chart is shown through (Table 34). Findings from chapters (4) and (5) showed an absence of strategic, practical, and subject domain knowledges within Org. A. There were no findings relating to absence of people, theoretical and process knowledge. Once this was done, the leader core competencies set alongside the OECD competency framework as shown through (Figure 5) helped to analyse the chapter (6) findings as shown through (Figure 27). Then (Table 1), (Table 2) and (Table 3) interpreted the key indicators of each key competency, as shown through parentheses in (6.1.1), (6.1.2), (6.2.1) and (6.2.2). This was followed by further strengthening the findings using (Figure 4) and (Figure 13), as shown through parentheses in (6.2.3).

Table 34: Summary of organisational knowledge traits

Organisational knowledge	Characteristics	Problem domains	Analysis
	People's knowledge	No findings	No findings
	Strategic knowledge	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) 4.3.1 The role of failed or stalled government projects 2) 5.4.1 Inability to amend the business plan in line with the economy setting 3) 5.4.2 Inability to explore the consequences with an early expansion beyond Bahrain 4) 5.4.3 Hiring new employees during an economic slowdown 5) 5.5.1 Neglecting to calculate the underlying costs associated with an early expansion 6) 5.5.2 Inability to adopt a course of action to minimise damaging influences 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1,2) Neglecting to pay adequate attention to the private sector customers when compiling the business plan 3,4) Inability to amend the business plan to address the risks associated with an early expansion 5) Inability to calculate the costs associated with an early expansion 6) Neglecting to adopt a course of action to minimise the negative impact of an economic crisis
	Theoretical knowledge	No findings	No findings
	Practical knowledge	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) 4.1.3 Impact of the drop in oil prices leading to late payments 2) 4.1.4 Local culture discourages outsiders from joining the business circle 3) 5.2.1 Not taking the initiative to visit the Tender Board 4) 5.2.2 Inability to pre-qualify with the government offices 5) 5.2.3 Inability to meet fellow tenderers 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Inability to understand that late payments are a cultural norm and neglecting to implement a holistic plan on how to absorb the impact when payments are late 2) Local culture is built around shared religion and customs among extended family members, and treat foreigners as 'outsiders' 3) By not being proactive by visiting the Tender Board frequently, resulted in losing critical tender information 4) By not attempting to qualify as a potential tenderer resulted in not receiving government tender information 5) By not attempting to meet fellow tenderers who had won past government tenders missed several discussion opportunities on past government tenders
	Process knowledge	No findings	No findings
	Subject domain knowledge	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) 4.3.3 Challenges from taking Tamkeen's financial help 2) 4.3.4 Tender Board' role towards allocation of government tender quotas 3) 5.3.1 Lack of support given to foreign-owned organisations 4) 5.3.2 Inability to benefit from Tamkeen's coaching and mentoring 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Neglecting to seek advice from the business circle prevented benefitting from Tamkeen's support 2) Neglecting to register with the government offices as a prospective bidder 3) By presuming that being foreign-owned prevented benefitting from Tamkeen's support 4) By presuming that coaching and mentoring support were for locally-owned organisations prevented benefitting from Tamkeen's guidance

Figure 27: Organisational knowledge findings summarised using the OECD competency framework



Source: OECD (2014, p.4)

6.1.1. Absence of Org. A's CEO's knowledge in strategic planning in business strategies

The findings showed that the absence of Org. A's CEO's knowledge in strategic planning has been a significant challenge for the organisation. The findings of (4.3.1) and (5.4.1) showed a lack of strategic planning knowledge from the CEO's perspective once it comes to the business model. Likewise, (5.2.3), (5.4.2), (5.4.3), (5.5.1) and (5.5.2) findings showed that the CEO's contribution on strategic planning was also lacking once it comes to the business plan.

Additionally, findings from (4.3.1) and (5.4.1) showed that the absence of the CEO's strategic planning for not being rational in responding to internal and external challenges (be visionary) were due to the CEO's lack of flexible thinking (flexible thinking) (OECD,

2014). Likewise, the absence of the CEO's strategic planning knowledge to recognise the level of influence applied with an organisational setting, as discussed in (5.2.3), (5.4.2), (5.4.3), (5.5.1) and (5.5.2), was due to the CEO's lack of analytical thinking (analytical thinking).

Lack of adequate attention to strategic planning places an organisation at risk (Berry, 1998). To stay ahead of turbulent times, business leaders "must actively plan for the future" (Ennis, 1998, p.54). Business leaders who abide by quick strategies enforce quick actions to grow the organisation (Jabbar and Hussein, 2017). These actions act as gateways to produce higher average results and strategic competitiveness. A business leader with a strategic vision thinks and plans to respond to challenges.

By not actively planning when it was stable with government projects, as endorsed by Ennis (1998), Org. A's CEO neglected to adopt a long-term vision for the organisation. Similar to the work of Berry (1998), not having a strategic plan resulted in hindering Org. A's growth, and this placed Org. A at risk. Aligned with the work of Jabbar and Hussein (2017), by neglecting to adopt a strategic vision for the organisation, the CEO was unable to reduce the risks responding to the economic crisis.

Executives must plan to execute the strategies to move the organisation in the right direction (Hrebiniak, 2005). Noble (1999, p.119) sees strategy implementation as a "relatively straightforward operationalisation of a clearly articulated strategic plan", or it can be "the total of the activities and choices required for the execution of a strategic plan" (Wheelen and Hunger, 2006, p.214). For a well-articulated strategy, as defined through (Figure 28), Čater and Pučko (2010) propose four frequently identified strategies: planning, organising, leadership, and controlling activities.

Figure 28: Overview of key activities for effective strategy execution

Activity group	Activities as operationalised in this study	Activities addressed in the literature
Planning activities	Formulating and implementing development programmes	Developing programmes, budgets and procedures (Wheelen and Hunger, 2006)
	Planning and implementing projects	Managing projects (Grundy, 1998; Minarro-Viseras, Baines and Sweeney, 2005)
	Using an effective annual planning system	Annual business planning (Birnbbaum, 2007)
	Applying action planning	Action planning (Birnbbaum, 2007); Turning strategy into action (Farsight Leadership Organisation, 2007)
Organising activities	Organising for strategy implementation	Fitting the organisation to the strategy (organisation design) (Lorange 1982); Organising for action (Wheelen and Hunger, 2006); Developing organisational structure (Birnbbaum, 2007)
	Allocating strict responsibility for strategy implementation	Translating enterprise-level plans into lower-unit level plans (Kaplan and Norton, 2005); Involving people from all organisational levels (Wheelen and Hunger, 2006)
Leadership activities	Using leadership to direct employees	Triggering enthusiasm in employees (Nicholls, 1994); Motivational leadership (Farsight Leadership Organisation, 2007); Leading the change (Brenes, Mena and Molina, 2008)
	Using formal communication	Communicating the corporate strategy (Kaplan and Norton, 2005); Communicating corporate strategy to people (Speculand, 2006)
	Applying Management By Objectives (MBO)	Aligning employee's goals with strategic goals (Kaplan and Norton, 2005); Management by objectives (Wheelen and Hunger, 2006)
	Applying Human Resource Management (HRM) activities	Executing HR activities (Ulrich, 1998); Managing human resource factors (Birnbbaum, 2007)
Controlling activities	Using an efficient tactical control system	Creating incentives and control mechanisms (Hrebiniak and Joyce, 1984); Monitoring and control (Birnbbaum, 2007); Implementing control (Brenes, Mena and Molina, 2008)
	Applying the Balanced Scorecard (BSC)	Using the Balanced Scorecard (Kaplan and Norton, 2006); Consistently measuring progress and performance (Farsight Leadership Organisation, 2007)

Source: Adapted from Čater and Pučko (2010, p.212)

6.1.2. Absence of Org. A's CEO's practical knowledge with its external stakeholders

The findings also showed that the absence of Org. A's CEO's practical knowledge had been an additional challenge for Org. A. The findings from (5.2.1) and (5.2.2) showed the CEO lacked practical knowledge when dealing with government offices. Additionally, findings from (4.1.3) and (4.1.4) further showed the absence of the CEO's practical knowledge on local business culture.

Additionally, (5.2.1) and (5.2.2) findings showed that the absence of the leader's practical knowledge of managing relationships with its key external stakeholders, which generate a long-term relationship, was due to the CEO's lack of knowledge on strategic networking

(strategic networking) (OECD, 2014). The inability to influence customers to consider challenging tasks and act, accordingly, as discussed in (4.1.3) showed a lack of the CEO's practical knowledge on client focus (client focus) (OECD, 2014). The CEO's practical knowledge on client focus (client focus) was once again observed in the (4.1.4) findings, with the CEO's inability to influence the community using personal reputation (OECD, 2014).

Findings from (Figure 6) and (2.4.2) showed that organisations take less interest in managing relationships with the government and were less robust when compared with other stakeholders (Dua, Hail and Wilkins, 2010). This inability places an organisation's operating income at risk. However, as shown through (Figure 7), government actions help organisations to develop infrastructure and provide capital to mitigate some of the negativity. Government's laws and policies often generate an overall negative impact on an organisation; however, instead of increasing shareholder returns, business leaders should liaise with the government regularly (Reich, 2014). Instead of using the government to gain sympathetic treatment over competitors, the new norm is to engage, not shield. (Table 35) adapted using Oppenheimer (2015) and Ireland's findings which show key activities for efficient practical execution.

Similar to Dua, Hail and Wilkins' (2010) findings, by not being proactive in managing its relationship with the government, Org. A's CEO lost opportunities to access critical government information. Additionally, by not being pro-active in managing a client-focused relationship with its stakeholders, the CEO missed information on local business culture. Corresponding with Reich (2014)'s findings, it was observed that the CEO visiting the government offices only at the time of forming Org. A, and not thereafter, has not been favourable for the organisation.

Table 35: Overview of key activities for effective practical execution

Activity group	Activities as operationalised in this study	Activities	References
Grow your network	Identify a key person	Get to know one primary key official who can introduce you to the circle.	Tips for developing relationships with municipal officials (Oppenheimer, 2015)
	Resource information	Form a two-way relationship by not only asking for help but be an information provider that will add value to the government.	
	Help with decision-making	Look for ways to help the government authority to avoid decisions that will harm your organisation.	
	Get out of the office	Sitting in the office will not lead to build relationships. Make a priority to attend local Chamber of Commerce and council meetings in communities at multiple locations. Building close relationships with the stakeholders help get the word out about one's business.	
	Look for reasons	Have reason to email or call when you reach out to your government contacts. Be prepared with information or a specific topic to discuss. This will lead to an easier conversation flow to get the jobs done quicker.	
Build a relationship	Ensure your research is relevant	Give government offices facts and figures and examples of stories that relate to the area of work.	Six tips to improve your government relations strategy (Ireland, 2019)
	Provide updates and briefings	Start by offering formal and informal briefings on your industry and primary challenges. Invite advisors and government officials to relevant events followed by email updates.	
	Organise events	Hold an event and invite key personnel that will add value to your organisation.	
	Know who's who	Do your homework well before a project begins, and directly engage with the people you intend to work with.	
	It's all about relationship building	Building a relationship is related to information sharing, which can significantly help to contact you when a business opportunity arises.	
	Bring in an external consultant	Consider hiring a consultant to aid to review and develop your intended strategy with primary challenges with the government.	

Source: Adapted from Oppenheimer (2015) and Ireland (2019)

6.1.3. Absence of Org. A's CEO's knowledge on subject domain knowledge on government activities

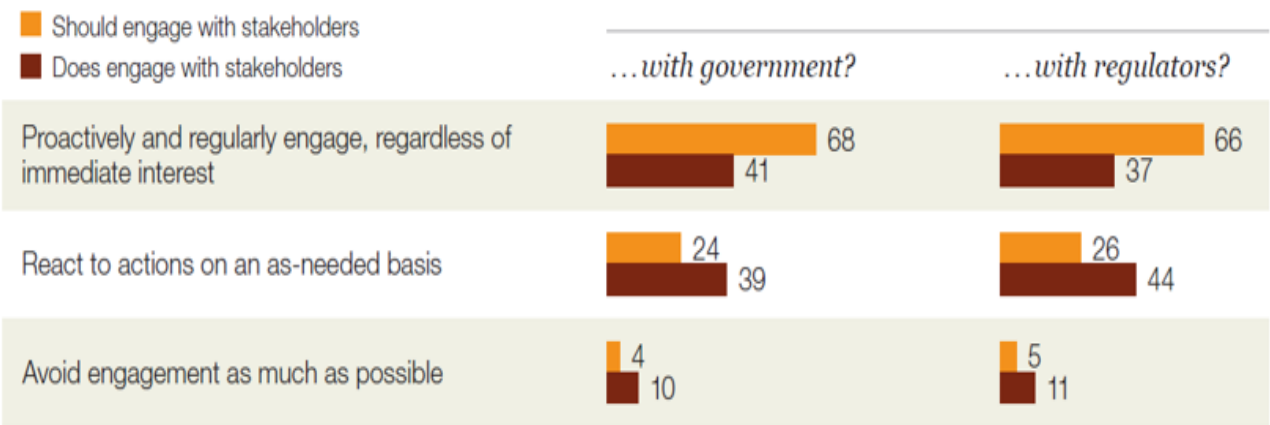
Further findings showed that the absence of subject domain knowledge had been an additional challenge for Org. A. Findings from (4.3.3), (4.3.4), (5.3.15.3.1) and (5.3.2) showed that the CEO's lack of subject domain knowledge on government matters had been a significant challenge for Org. A.

Findings from (4.3.3), (4.3.4), (5.3.15.3.1) and (5.3.2) showed that the absence of subject domain knowledge was due to the CEO's inability to build a strategic networking relationship with its key government offices (OECD, 2014). This inability has resulted in Org. A losing critical tender information. The inability to build a relationship with the government offices was partly due to the CEO not being pro-active and blaming the government offices for being discriminatory (Spencer and Spencer, 1993; Nolan, 1998).

Even though there was evidence of government malpractices in some instances, the CEO’s subjugated attitude on government offices and its working styles, presuming that every tender carried hidden clauses, hindered Org. A from having access to vital tender information (Spencer and Spencer, 1993; Dua, Hail and Wilkins, 2011).

McKinsey and Company, through their online survey sent to 1,167 business leaders, show that today’s business leaders interact much less with government offices compared to 2009. Regulators and government offices are second only to customers and play an influential role in an organisation’s economic value. Developing country business leaders saw a good relationship built with the government offices significantly decreased its operating income. (Figure 29) shows ways an organisation should engage with government offices.

Figure 29: Room for engagement



Source: Dua, Hail and Wilkins (2011, p.5)

Analogous to McKinsey and Company’s (2011) findings, Org. A’s CEO, by not proactively engaging with the government offices and neglecting to build a robust networking relationship with its key government offices, missed Org. A having access to key information. Additionally, similar to McKinsey and Company’s (2011) findings, the findings of (2.4.3) and (

Figure 12) showed that by not being pro-active and building a relationship with the government, but instead blaming it for not being transparent, Org. A's CEO displayed avoider qualities.

The core advancements in thinking brought about by findings in (6.1) identified that a lack of adequate planning when responding to an economic crisis places the organisation at risk (Berry, 1998). Business leaders who impose remedial steps in a crisis (Ennis, 1998) are likely to experience less damages than those who neglect to set such steps (Jabbar and Hussein, 2017). Planning comes from the leadership (Noble, 1999; Hrebiniak, 2005), and leaders who lack the knowledge in strategic planning is a significant challenge for the organisation (Jabbar and Hussein, 2017). Furthermore, having a strategic plan is not beneficial if it is not communicated and implemented amongst its key players (Hrebiniak, 2005; Wheelen and Hunger, 2006). Strategic knowledge is a collective element learned through practice and collective knowledge from key external stakeholders, either through government offices or the business circle (Dua, Hail and Wilkins, 2010; Reich, 2014). This section also identified the importance of recognising the government's role and laws and policies that impact the organisation (Dua, Hail and Wilkins, 2010). Instead of using the government to receive sympathetic treatment, regularly engaging with them helps identify executing practical strategies towards an organisation's benefit (McKinsey and Company, 2011; Reich, 2014).

6.1.4. Concluding remarks associated with organisational knowledge from Org. A's CEO's perspective

Three factors from the CEO's perspective contributed to Org. A's organisational knowledge neglecting to take the organisation forward. By not actively planning when it was stable with government projects, the CEO neglected to prepare a long-term strategy for Org. A. Additionally, by not being pro-active, the CEO neglected to build a strategic relationship with its key external stakeholders. Instead of being pro-active in managing healthy relationships with key government offices, the CEO blamed the government offices for not being transparent, resulting in not having access to vital information.

(Table 36) shows that the CEO's lack of flexible thinking prevented it from responding to internal and external challenges. Additionally, the CEO's lack of analytical thinking neglected to identify the level of influx applied towards the organisation. Likewise, the CEO's lack of knowledge on strategic networking neglected to build a long-term relationship with its key external stakeholders and this inability neglected to influence its clients.

Table 36: Summary of organisational knowledge from Org. A CEO's perspective

Ref	Key Competency		Yes	No	Ref			Yes	No
OECD (2014, p.4)	Delivery-related achieving results	Analytical Thinking	–	✓	Spencer and Spencer (1993, p.8)	Skills	Critical analysis and problem-solving skills	–	–
		Achievement Focus	–	–			Communication skills	–	–
		Drafting Skills	–	–			Conceptualisation and abstraction skills	–	–
		Flexible Thinking	–	✓			Skills to manage situational politics	–	–
		Managing Resources	–	–			Knowledge	Technical knowledge	–
		Teamwork and Team Leadership	–	–		Work experiential knowledge		–	–
	Interpersonal building Relationships	Client Focus	–	✓		Comprehensive knowledge		–	–
		Diplomatic Sensitivity	–	–		Contextual knowledge		–	–
		Influencing	–	–		Self-concept	Walk the middle ground	–	–
		Negotiating	–	–			Be visionary	–	✓
		Organisational Knowledge	–	–		Traits	Be creative	–	–
	Strategic planning for the future	Developing Talent	–	–			Be open minded	–	–
		Organisational Alignment	–	–		Motives	Be passionate	–	–
		Strategic Networking	–	✓			Be resilient	–	–
		Strategic Thinking	–	–					

6.2. Leadership competencies and self-efficacies within Org. A's leadership

This DBA research also discovered that an absence of leadership competencies within Org. A's leadership has been a significant challenge for the organisation. The findings showed, for example, that there was a lack of leadership skills when working with external stakeholders (5.2.3), as well as a lack of leadership knowledge in employee selection (5.1.3). However, as (Table 37) shows, there were no findings on absence of self-concept, traits, and motives within the leadership. Additionally, leader self-efficacy characteristics from the leader's perspective are shown through (Table 38).

Table 37: Summary of missing leadership competencies

	Characteristics	Problem domains	Analysis
Competency skills	Skills	1) 5.2.3 Inability to meet fellow successful tenderers	1) Inability to look for government tender information through weekly 'Majlises' or open houses
	Knowledge	1) 5.1.3 HR selection processes not linked to organisational development	1) Employee's not seeing the benefits of expanding its customer base through networking
	Self-concept	No findings	No findings
	Traits	No findings	No findings
	Motives	No findings	No findings

Table 38: Summary of leader self-efficacy characteristics from the leader's perspective

	Characteristics	Problem domains	Analysis
Self-efficacy	Self-confidence	No findings	No findings
	Accurate self-evaluation	1) 5.1.2 Inability to assess the benefits of networking with other business leaders	1) CEO admitted neglecting to weigh the benefits of building a more comprehensive business circle
	Willingness to take risks	No findings	No findings
	Sense of accomplishment	No findings	No findings
	Fear of risks	1) 5.3.1. Foreign-owned status presumptions	1) CEO feared the risks associated with Tamkeen's loans
	Fear of uncertainty	1) 5.1.2 Inability to assess the benefits of networking with other business leaders	1) By not belonging to a business circle, the CEO showed fears relating to uncertainty and feelings of failure
	Feelings of failure	1) 5.1.2 Inability to assess the benefits of networking with other business leaders	1) By not belonging to a business circle, the CEO showed fears relating to uncertainty and feelings of failure
	Impression management	1) 5.2.2 Inability to pre-qualify with the government offices 2) 5.3.1 Lack of support given to foreign-owned organisations	1) CEO assumed that private organisations by default are short-listed as potential tenderers 2) CEO assumed that by being foreign-owned, Tamkeen will be discriminatory towards ownership

6.2.1. Absence of Org. A CEO's competency skills dealing with external stakeholders

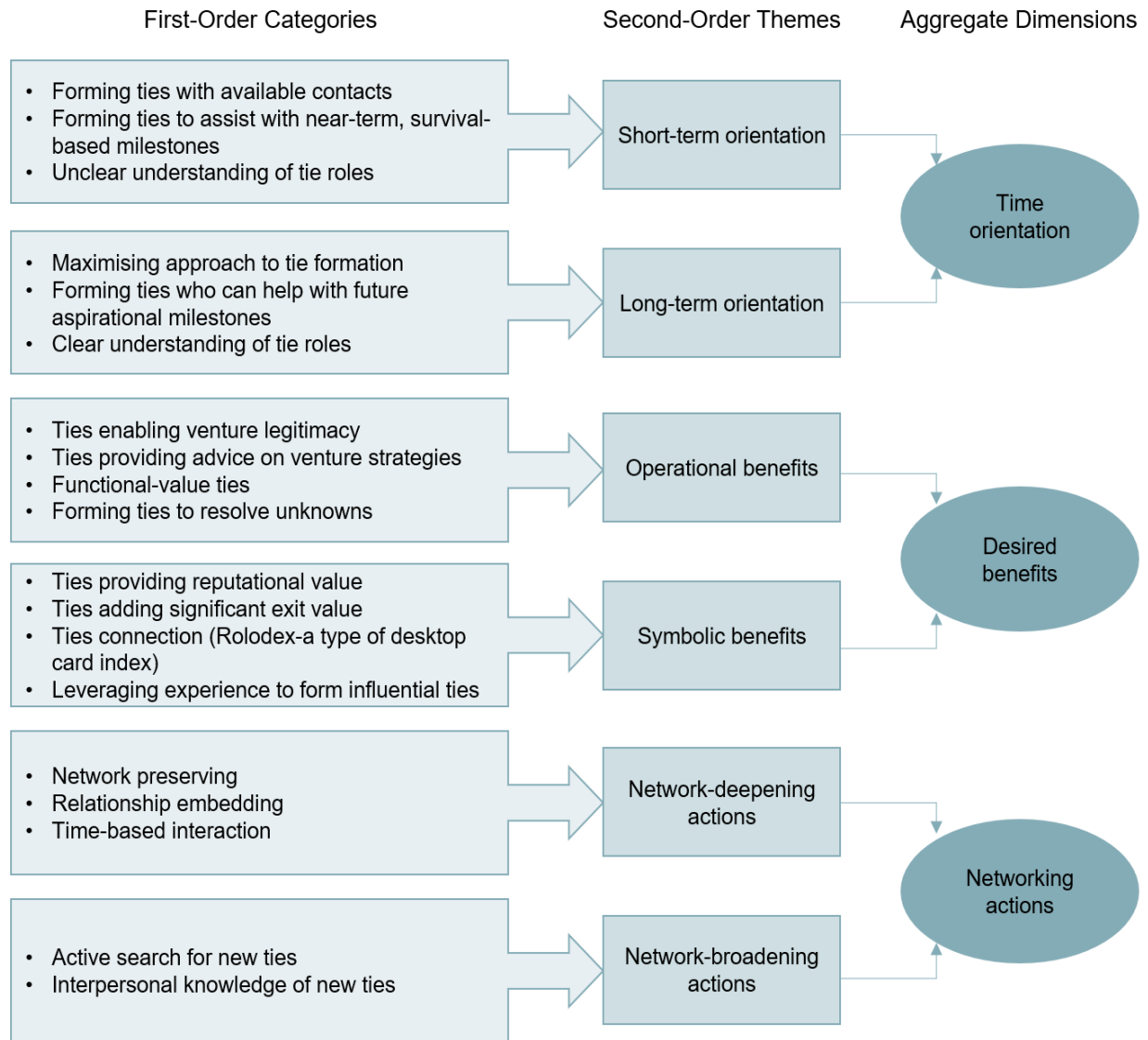
Findings from (5.2.3) showed that due to the CEO's absence of competency skills (critical analysis and problem-solving skills), the CEO neglected to seek and recognise advice from the business circle on important business matters, and this was due to a lack of analytical thinking (analytical thinking) (OECD, 2014). An additional inability due to the CEO's absence of competency skills was neglecting to identify a plan of directions to communicate (communication skills) its needs and strategic guidelines (strategic thinking)

OECD, 2014). Likewise, the inability to manage a strategic networking relationship (strategic networking) with its key government offices to build a long-term relationship was also due to Org. A's CEO's absence of competency skills, as shown through (6.1.2) and (6.1.3) findings.

Less active and less prepared business leaders neglect to benefit from other business leaders. This inability is not due to the leader's limited knowledge, but due to the lack of ability to seek the right information (Cooper, Folta and Woo, 1995). This prevents the business leader from playing an active role in assessing the organisation's strengths and weaknesses to identify corrective steps. However, this inability seems to be quite common among less experienced business leaders who seek less information or operate in less familiar domains (Spencer and Spencer, 1993). (Figure 30) shows how an organisation can engage with its external stakeholders. Networking events are helpful platforms for small business owners to see how other business owners build their market segment strategies (Spencer and Spencer, 1993). Information shared through networking events are useful sources for competitiveness (Cronin-Gilmore, 2012). Org. A's CEO, being less active and less prepared, was not able to seek the right information from the business circle.

Analogous to Cooper, Folta and Woo's (1995) findings, by not being proactive in engaging and building a healthy relationship with its business circle, Org. A's CEO missed many learning opportunities, and this was shown through (6.1.2) and (6.1.3) findings.

Figure 30: Networking behaviour based on leader's perspective



Source: Zheng, Ahsan and DeNoble (2019, p.9)

6.2.2. Absence of Org. A's CEO's knowledge competencies dealing with employees

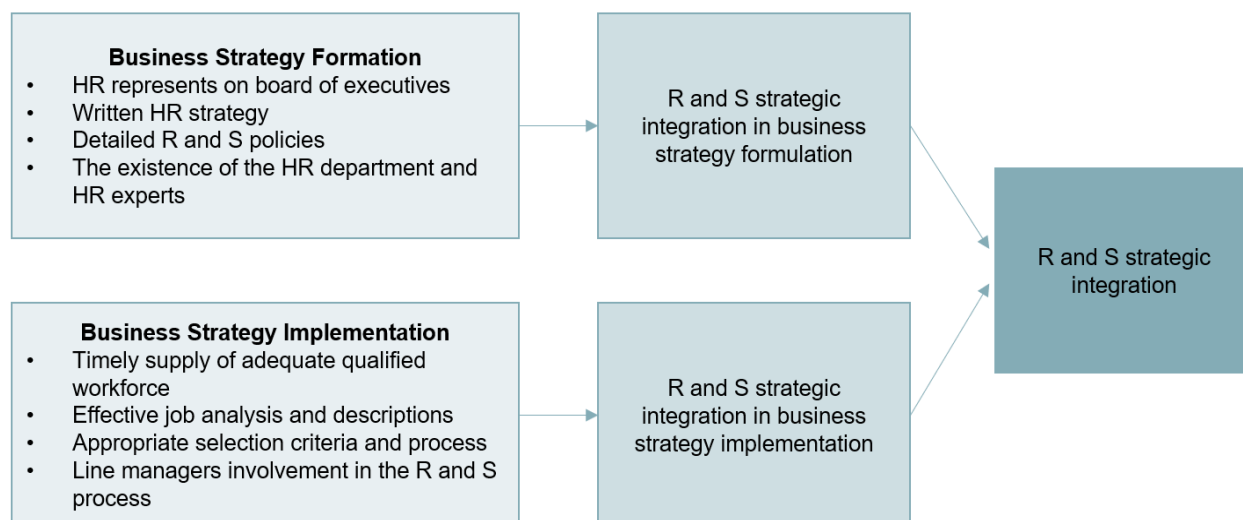
Findings from (5.1.3) showed that due to the CEO's lack of knowledge competencies, Org. A neglected to identify areas for improvement. Due to inadequate leader focus on organisational achievements (achievement focus), this hindered Org. A from making employees responsible for translating business opportunities into goals (OECD, 2014). Likewise, setting and redefining priorities and the inability to increase employees'

responsiveness to the organisation's external and internal challenges (organisational alignment) showed the CEO's lack of knowledge competencies in managing resources (managing resources) (OECD, 2014). An additional obstacle due to the CEO's absence of knowledge competencies, which neglected to communicate its decisions and hold its team accountable for agreed commitments, was due to the CEO's lack of knowledge in managing a team (managing resources) (OECD, 2014).

Similarly, due to the CEO's absence of knowledge competencies, they neglected to develop talent (developing talent) with due authority and neglected to direct their employees to take ownership to carry out job responsibilities (OECD, 2014). An additional challenge due to the CEO's absence of knowledge competencies was neglecting to develop a strategic direction for the organisation and holding the team to account for its development (teamwork and team leadership) (OECD, 2014).

The most complex, time-consuming, and cost-functional aspect of HR planning is Recruitment and Selection (R&S) (Chanda, Bansal and Chanda, 2010). When R&S strategies are not aligned with the organisation structure, processes and systems, reaching organisational goals is never a possibility (Johnson and Scholes, 1999). A well-defined job description linked to a suitable selection method makes hiring successful (Plumbley, 1985). A strategic workforce with a holistic approach, aligning both internal and external drivers, leads an organisation towards its success (CIPD, 2018). However, the 'best fit' is an alignment between the organisation's business needs and HR strategies (Armstrong, 2012, p.23). (Figure 31) shows steps for recruiting and selecting employees aligned with the organisational objectives.

Figure 31: Recruitment and selection framework set alongside organisational objectives



Source: Chanda, Bansal, and Chanda (2010, p.5)

Similar to the work of Johnson and Scholes (1999), Chanda, Bansal and Chanda (2010) and CIPD (2018), since Org. A's R&S strategies were not aligned with its structure, processes and systems, its employees did not see the importance of transforming business opportunities into goals. Aligned to the work of Plumbley (1985) and Armstrong (2012), gaps in Org. A's R&S strategy and the CEO's inability to incorporate a holistic approach when hiring its employees neglected to absorb the right talent.

6.2.3. Absence of Org. A's CEO's self-efficacy characteristics

This DBA research also discovered that an absence of Org. A's CEO's self-efficacy characteristics has been an additional challenge for the organisation. However, not all the data collected alongside self-efficacy characteristics were challenges. There were positive findings as well. Findings from (5.1.2) showed an accurate self-evaluation from the CEO's perspective by not belonging to a business circle and showed the CEO's fear of failure and feelings of uncertainty for the organisation. Org. A's CEO admitted that by not being in a business circle, this has significantly impacted the organisation and projected a lack of self-confidence.

Additionally, findings from (5.3) showed that due to an absence of the CEO's self-efficacy characteristics, the CEO feared risks associated with government loans. By presuming that the government offices will discriminate against foreign-owned organisations, this showed that the CEO's impression of government matters hindered it from benefitting from gaining help from the government (work experiential knowledge). This inability, as discussed in (5.3.1)'s findings, showed Org. A's CEO abstained from asking for Tamkeen loans, and one reason for this inability was due to lack of collateral requirements. However, there were no findings relating to the CEO's readiness to address this challenge. Likewise, since Org. A did not ask for government help, there were no findings related to a sense of accomplishment.

Most business leaders presume that dealing with government offices is complicated, but Reich (2014) says, for the immediate future, the government must take an active interest in how an organisation is managed. Business leaders who expect the government to be pro-active with its progress must be proactive and adopt a different way to partner with them. (Table 39) shows effective steps to build a successful relationship with the government offices.

Table 39: Effective measures to build a successful relationship with the government offices

S/No	Action	Description
1	Understanding local government relations	To reduce the risk of miscommunication that could potentially lead to delays, knowing the local government systems and realities is vital.
2	Build an early outreach	Explaining the project plans at the inception gives a clear indication of the organisation's intentions and goals. A clear communication pattern established from the beginning ensures relationships are transparent.
3	Appointing a specialised person	To appoint a person who is knowledgeable in government affairs ensures establishing goodwill.
4	Have a single point of contact	Integrating local government relations into fieldwork can be done by training field staff and maintaining a single point of contact. This emphasises the importance of regulatory approvals across departments.

Source: One Acre Fund (2015, p.1)

Similar to the findings of Reich (2014), by neglecting to actively seek information and not recognising that the government plays an important role in an organisation's well-being, and presuming that the government discriminates against foreign-owned organisations, Org. A's CEO neglected to benefit from Tamkeen's support. (Table 40) is a summary of leadership competencies from the CEO's perspective.

Table 40: Summary of leadership competencies from Org. A CEO's perspective

Ref	Key Competency		Yes	No	Ref			Yes	No
OECD (2014, p.4)	Delivery-related achieving results	Analytical Thinking	–	✓	Spencer and Spencer (1993, p.8)	Skills	Critical analysis and problem-solving skills	–	✓
		Achievement Focus	–	✓			Communication skills	–	✓
		Drafting Skills	–	–			Conceptualisation and abstraction skills	–	–
		Flexible Thinking	–	–			Skills to manage situational politics	–	–
		Managing Resources	–	✓		Knowledge	Technical knowledge	–	–
		Teamwork and Team Leadership	–	✓			Work experiential knowledge	–	✓
	Interpersonal building relationships	Client Focus	–	–			Comprehensive Knowledge	–	–
		Diplomatic Sensitivity	–	–			Contextual knowledge	–	–
		Influencing	–	–		Self-concept	Walk the middle ground	–	–
		Negotiating	–	–			Be visionary	–	–
		Organisational Knowledge	–	–		Traits	Be creative	–	–
	Strategic planning for the future	Developing Talent	–	✓			Be open minded	–	–
		Organisational Alignment	–	✓		Motives	Be passionate	–	–
		Strategic Networking	–	✓			Be resilient	–	–
		Strategic Thinking	–	✓					

The core advancements in thinking brought about by (6.2) findings showed the importance of leadership competencies within an organisation when encountering challenging situations. Leader competency skills are collective elements and can be used higher or lower depending on the situation (Chandler and Jansen; 1992; Man, 2001). A lack of these competencies can lead to failure to identify a plan of direction for the organisation (Cooper, Folta and Woo, 1995). This section recognised the critical importance of a leader's analytical thinking and strategic networking to take the organisation forward (Spencer and Spencer, 1993). This section also identified the importance of having a balanced R&S strategy (Johnson and Scholes, 1999) when selecting employees. The 'best fit' aligns with an organisation's business needs and HR strategies (Armstrong, 2012). An additional finding through this section discovered that

an absence of Org. A's CEO's self-efficacy characteristics has been an additional challenge for the organisation (Bandura, 1977). Due to the absence of the CEO's self-efficacy characteristics, the CEO feared risks associated with government loans. This inability was due to the CEO's impression on government matters that these offices would discriminate against foreign-owned organisations (Saxena, 2017). A critical finding through this section was that presumptions would not take the organisation forward. The only way to benefit from government offices and the business circle is to 'get up and go' and meet them in person to see what they do to 'survive' in an economic crisis (Reich, 2014).

6.2.4. Concluding remarks associated with leadership competencies and self-efficacies within Org. A's leadership

Three competencies from Org. A CEO's perspective hindered Org. A responding to the economic crisis. An absence of competency skills from the CEO led to neglecting to identify guidance from the business circle. Additionally, due to the CEO's lack of leader knowledge competencies (comprehensive knowledge), they neglected to incorporate a holistic approach aligned with Org. A's strategies and failed to attract the right talent for the organisation (work experiential knowledge). This inability (communication skills) hindered its employees from being responsible for its success. Lastly, due to the absence of the CEO's self-efficacy characteristics (technical knowledge), Org. A's CEO feared risks linked with government loans, presuming that Tamkeen will discriminate against foreign-owned organisations (organisational knowledge). This inability hindered Org. A from acquiring Tamkeen's support. (Table 41) shows a summary of the CEO's self-efficacy characteristics.

Table 41: Summary of Org. A CEO's self-efficacy characteristics

Ref	Key Competency		Yes	No	Ref			Yes	No
OECD (2014, p.4)	Delivery-related Achieving Results	Analytical Thinking	–	–	Spencer and Spencer (1993, p.8)	Skills	Critical analysis and problem-solving skills	–	–
		Achievement Focus	–	–			Communication skills	–	✓
		Drafting Skills	–	–			Conceptualisation and abstraction skills	–	–
		Flexible Thinking	–	–			Skills to manage situational politics	–	–
		Managing Resources	–	–		Knowledge	Technical knowledge	–	✓
		Teamwork and Team Leadership	–	–			Work experiential knowledge	–	✓
	Interpersonal building relationships	Client Focus	–	–			Comprehensive knowledge	–	✓
		Diplomatic Sensitivity	–	–			Contextual knowledge	–	–
		Influencing	–	–		Self-concept	Walk the middle ground	–	–
		Negotiating	–	–			Be visionary	–	–
		Organisational Knowledge	–	✓		Traits	Be creative	–	–
	Strategic planning for the future	Developing Talent	–	–			Be open minded	–	–
		Organisational Alignment	–	–		Motives	Be passionate	–	–
		Strategic Networking	–	–			Be resilient	–	–
		Strategic Thinking	–	–					

6.3. Chapter summary

The findings from (6.1) showed three key reasons that led to Org. A's organisational knowledge neglecting to take the organisation forward from the CEO's perspective. A key challenge was, as discussed through (6.1.1), neglecting to identify a strategic plan when Org. A was stable with government projects, and how to sustain it in the future. An additional challenge as discussed through (6.1.2) was due to the absence of the CEO's practical knowledge: the CEO was not successful in managing relationships with key government offices. This inability hindered Org. A from forming a long-term relationship with its key stakeholders. Lastly, as discussed through (6.1.3), due to the CEO's lack of subject domain knowledge on government matters, instead of being pro-active in maintaining healthy relationships with its key stakeholders, the CEO blamed the government for not being transparent. This inability hindered Org. A from having access to vital information.

Additionally, findings from (6.2) showed three additional reasons that hindered the CEO's ability to take the organisation forward. As shown through (6.2.1), a lack of leaders' analytical thinking due to the CEO's absence of competency skills led to a failure to

identify guidance received from the business circle. An additional inability, as discussed through (6.2.1), was due to the absence of leaders' analytical thinking, which meant they failed to recognise a plan of direction to communicate the needs and strategic guidelines. Likewise, as discussed through (6.2.2), due to the inadequate leader focus on organisational achievements, the CEO did not set and redirect organisational priorities and hold its workforce to be responsive to internal and external challenges. This inability hindered its employees from being responsible towards the organisation's success. An important inability, as discussed in (6.2.3), was the CEO not being pro-active to interact and engage with the business circle and neglected to appreciate their guidance. This inability was due to the CEO's impression of government offices, which hindered Org. A from benefitting from Tamkeen's support.

Below are the summarised findings and (n=1)¹² indicates a point given to each key competency. The OECD competency (Figure 5) and the expected competencies by professional IT architects' frameworks (Figure 13) further strengthened the findings from chapter (6).

(Table 36) showed the CEO's lack of flexible thinking (n=1) which hindered Org. A's employees from being rationally responsive to Org. A's external and internal challenges. The CEO's lack of analytical thinking (n=1) neglected to identify the level of influx applied towards Org. A. This showed the CEO's inability to apply a strategic vision to plan and respond to the challenges (n=1). The inability to build a long-term strategic networking relationship with its key stakeholders was due to the CEO's lack of knowledge on strategic networking (n=1). This inability hindered influence over customers to consider challenging tasks (n=1).

(Table 40) showed that due to the CEO's lack of analytical thinking (n=1), the CEO's absence of competency skills neglected to identify guidance received from the business circle (n=1). This inability was, as discussed in (6.1.2), due to the CEO's inability to

¹² Referred to a key competency.

network with the business circle (n=1). An additional inability was neglecting to identify a plan of action to communicate Org. A's needs (n=1), which was due to an absence of strategic thinking (n=1). Inadequate focus on organisational achievements (n=1) led to failure to identify areas for improvement (n=1), and this inability overlooked holding its employees and translating business opportunities into goals. Likewise, by being unproductive in managing its employees (n=1), the CEO neglected to identify its employees' response to internal and external challenges (n=1). An additional inability was due to the CEO's lack of expertise to manage its team (n=1), by not recognising ways to communicate (n=1) its decisions to hold its employees to agreed commitments. By not developing talent (n=1) with due authority, the CEO neglected to direct its employees to take ownership and undertake job responsibilities.

(Table 41) showed the CEO's lack of practical knowledge when dealing with government offices (n=1). This inability was partly due to the CEO's limited understanding of how knowledge can be used to lead and influence Org. A (n=1). The CEO's limited practical knowledge (n=1) hindered seeing how government offices work. By presuming (n=1) Tamkeen will discriminate against foreign-owned organisations (n=1) and not reaching out to them, this prevented Org. A benefitting from Tamkeen.

(Table 42) shows the overall findings from (6.1) and (6.2). The overall findings shown in this chapter were that Org. A's CEO scored high on analytical thinking (n=2)¹³ alongside delivery-related findings. Except for drafting skills, the rest of the areas in delivery-related fields scored equal scores (n=1=achievement focus), (n=1=flexible thinking), (n=1=managing resources) and (n=1=teamwork and team leadership). Interpersonal competencies on client focus (n=1) and organisational knowledge (n=1) scored high as well. There were no findings alongside diplomatic sensitivity, influencing and negotiating skills. High scores were observed in all the areas alongside Org. A's CEO's strategic planning for the future. Strategic networking (n=1) secured the highest rating. Developing talent (n=1), strategic thinking (n=1) and organisational alignment (n=1) received equal

¹³ Accumulated competency

scores. Analysing leader competency skills, leader communication skills (n=1) and work experiential knowledge (n=2) secured a high rating. Likewise, critical analysis and problem-solving skills (n=1), technical (n=1) and comprehensive (n=1) knowledge scored equal scores. A score was also received for not being a visionary leader (n=1) on organisational matters; however, there were no findings relating to the rest of the areas on leader competency skills.

Table 42: Overall findings of chapter (6)

Ref	Key Competency		Yes	No	Ref			Yes	No
OECD (2014, p.4)	Delivery-related achieving results	Analytical Thinking	–	2	Spencer and Spencer (1993, p.8)	Skills	Critical Analysis & Problem-Solving Skills	–	1
		Achievement Focus	–	1			Communication Skills	–	2
		Drafting Skills	–	–			Conceptualisation and Abstraction Skills	–	–
		Flexible Thinking	–	1			Skills to Manage Situational Politics	–	–
		Managing Resources	–	1					
		Teamwork and Team Leadership	–	1		Knowledge	Technical Knowledge	–	1
	Interpersonal building relationships	Client Focus	–	1			Work Experiential Knowledge	–	2
		Diplomatic Sensitivity	–	–			Comprehensive Knowledge	–	1
		Influencing	–	–			Contextual Knowledge	–	–
		Negotiating	–	–		Self-concept	Walk the Middle Ground	–	–
		Organisational Knowledge	–	1			Be Visionary	–	1
	Strategic planning for the future	Developing Talent	–	1		Traits	Be Creative	–	–
		Organisational Alignment	–	1			Be Open Minded	–	–
		Strategic Networking	–	2		Motives	Be Passionate	–	–
		Strategic Thinking	–	1			Be Resilient	–	–

The next chapter discusses the key findings by ‘uncovering of wrong traits and hidden roots’ and the absence of organisational knowledge, leadership and self-efficacies within Org. A’s leadership. This chapter also identifies jointly agreed strategies to address the findings that need to be resolved, together with whom the problem relates to within Org. A.

Chapter 7: Conclusions, recommendations and action implementations

This chapter is divided into four sections. (7.1) identifies the key findings by ‘uncovering of wrong traits and hidden roots’ as shown through (7.1.1), and the absence of organisational knowledge, leadership and self-efficacies within the organisation’s leadership that was a barrier to react to the economic crisis is shown in (7.1.2). (7.1) addresses the findings to be resolved together with whom the problem relates to within Org. A, as shown through (7.1.3). (7.2) answers the research questions addressed through (1.3.1), (1.3.2) and (1.3.3). Reflections on action implementations and changes achieved are discussed through (7.3), from a first-person (7.3.1), second-person (7.3.2), and lastly from a third-person (7.3.3) perspective. This chapter ends by addressing the limitations of undertaking this DBA research (7.4).

7.1. Key findings

This section discusses the key findings of this DBA research from (7.1.1), (7.1.2) and (7.1.3) viewpoints.

7.1.1. Uncovering of wrong traits and hidden roots

As indicated through (1.2), Org. A presumed ‘outside causes’ associated with the drop in oil prices and the economic crisis were the core causes behind its revenue losses. This prevented it from investigating possible ‘inside causes’ within Org. A that could have been mostly responsible for its revenue losses. However, as with the findings of the ‘dot-com bubble’, as shown through chapters (4) and (5), the findings showed that the unseen causes were more profound than what was visible.

The findings showed that Org. A’s actors neglected to amend its business plans to address market warnings and market pulling drives, and instead focused on unproven innovations. Similarly, by solely focusing on numerical values and overlooking how to generate cash flow, its actors overlooked the numerous warning signals of a possible burst. These collective reasons led to poorly informed decisions. As with the ‘dot-com

bubble' period, Org. A's actors neglected to set long-term goals and understand how to invest their capital and expand its portfolio. The findings showed that, instead of relying on logical reasoning, Org. A's emotionally driven actors were following speculations and wrong traits. Similar to the 'dot-com bubble' period, the findings of chapters (4) and (5), set alongside the present economic crisis, disclosed how Org. A's actors neglected to understand the common market rules and this has led to hidden roots behind its revenue losses.

The next section (7.1.2) discusses the attempts to have a jointly built understanding with Org. A as to why it was losing revenues. This process needed a participative involvement (PAR) in an agreed setting to generate actionable knowledge to change and improve the situation.

7.1.2. Absence of organisational knowledge, leadership competencies and self-efficacies within the leadership of Org. A was a barrier to reaction

Chapter (6) findings showed that the absence of the CEO's strategic planning knowledge had been a key challenge for Org. A. The findings in (4.3.1) and (5.4.1) showed a lack of strategic planning knowledge from the CEO's perspective when it comes to the business model. On reflection, the (4.3.1) and (5.4.1) findings showed that the absence of the CEO's strategic planning knowledge for not being rational in responding to internal and external challenges was due to the CEO's lack of flexible thinking. Likewise, the absence of the CEO's strategic planning knowledge to recognise the level of influence applied with an organisational setting, as discussed in (5.2.3), (5.4.2), (5.4.3), (5.5.1) and (5.5.2), was due to the CEO's lack of analytical thinking.

Similarly, chapter (6) findings showed that the absence of Org. A's CEO's practical knowledge had been an additional challenge for Org. A. The findings of (5.2.1) and (5.2.2) showed the CEO's lack of practical knowledge when dealing with government offices. Additionally, the findings of (5.2.1) and (5.2.2) showed that the absence of leaders' practical knowledge of managing relationships with its key external stakeholders, which

generate a long-term relationship, was due to the CEO's lack of knowledge on strategic networking (2.6).

Similarly, findings of (4.1.3) and (4.1.4) further showed the absence of the CEO's practical knowledge on local business culture. The inability to influence customers to consider challenging tasks and act accordingly, as discussed in (4.1.3), showed the CEO's lack of practical knowledge on client focus. The CEO's practical knowledge on client focus was once again observed in (4.1.4)'s findings, with the CEO's inability to influence the community using personal reputation (OECD, 2014).

The findings also showed that the absence of subject domain knowledge had been an additional challenge for Org. A. (4.3.3), (4.3.4), (5.3.1) and (5.3.2) showed that the CEO's lack of subject domain knowledge on government matters had been a significant challenge for Org. A. On reflection, it showed that the CEO's inability to form a strategic networking relationship with its key government offices resulted in losing critical tender information. This inability was partly due to the CEO not proactively engaging with the government offices and neglecting to build a robust networking relationship with its key government offices, which missed having access to vital government information.

An additional challenge identified from the chapter (6) findings showed the CEO's absence of competency skills when dealing with external stakeholders. On reflection, the chapter (6) findings showed the CEO neglected to seek and recognise advice from the business circle on important business matters, and this was due to a lack of analytical thinking. Another inability due to the CEO's absence of competency skills was neglecting to identify a plan of directions to communicate Org. A's strategic guidelines. This inability, as shown through (6.1.2) and (6.1.3), further hindered building a long-term relationship with its key government offices.

An added chapter (6) finding was the absence of the CEO's knowledge competencies in dealing with its employees. On reflection, the findings showed that due to inadequate

leader focus on organisational achievements, this hindered holding its employees to translate business opportunities into goals. Similarly, the CEO's lack of knowledge competencies in managing resources resulted in not being able to influence its employees to respond to its internal and external challenges. Further reflections showed that the leader's lack of knowledge in managing a team resulted in not being able to hold its team accountable on agreed commitments. An additional challenge due to the CEO's absence of knowledge competencies was neglecting to develop a strategic direction for Org. A and holding its team to account for its development.

The findings of Chapter (6) further showed that an absence of the CEO's self-efficacy characteristics has been an additional challenge for Org. A. On reflection, (5.1.2) findings showed that the CEO, by not belonging to a business circle, lost important information. Similarly, (5.3.2) findings showed that the CEO's impressions on government offices prevented it from benefitting from Tamkeen's support. Likewise, (5.3.1) findings showed the fears associated with collateral assets, which further prevented acquiring Tamkeen's support. Further reflections showed the CEO's inability to seek help from the other business leaders, projecting a lack of accomplishment.

The next section (7.1.3) identifies strategies to resolve the hidden roots within Org. A.

7.1.3. Strategies to resolve the hidden roots within Org. A

An overview of the findings of chapters (4) and (5) and (7.1.1), alongside those of the 'dot-com bubble', showed that Org. A's actors neglected to identify the standard market rules. Similarly, an overview of chapter (6)'s findings shown through (7.1.2) findings showed that the absence of organisational knowledge, leadership competencies and self-efficacies within the leadership had been a primary challenge for Org. A. These findings, shown through (7.3), served as a 'bridge' to address the findings to be resolved together with whom the problem relates within Org. A.

The next section (7.2) attempts to answer the research questions addressed through (1.3.1), (1.3.2) and (1.3.3).

7.2. Answers to the research questions

The causes of Org. A's revenue losses examined through macro-, meso- and micro-economic conditions are presented through (7.2.1), (7.2.2) and (7.2.3).

7.2.1. What was the impact of Bahrain's economic crisis on Org. A's revenue losses?

Initially, Org. A presumed the drop in oil prices and the government-imposed austerity steps caused its revenue losses since June 2014, which continued through the years 2015 and 2016 as initially addressed through (1.3.1). As discussed in (7.1.1), chapter (4)'s findings showed that 'outside causes' associated with the drop in oil prices and the government-imposed austerity steps were not the primary causes behind its revenue losses.

7.2.2. What was the influence of discriminatory practices impacting foreign-owned organisations on Org. A's revenue losses?

An additional presumption was seen in Org. A not benefitting from Tamkeen's support, presuming that Tamkeen discriminates against foreign-owned organisations as initially addressed through (1.3.2). (7.1.2) and chapter (4)'s findings showed that except for Org. A, the rest of the organisations have benefitted from Tamkeen's support and Tamkeen did not discriminate against foreign-owned organisations in Bahrain.

7.2.3. What was the influence of organisational particularities on Org. A's revenue losses?

As discussed in (7.1.1) and chapter (4), the findings showed that 'outside causes' associated with the drop in oil prices and the government-imposed austerity measures were not the primary causes behind Org. A's revenue losses. Similarly, (7.1.2) and chapter (4) findings showed that except for Org. A, the rest of the organisations have

benefitted from Tamkeen's support and Tamkeen had not discriminated against foreign-owned organisations in Bahrain. Likewise, as discussed through (7.1.2) and chapters (5) and (6), the findings showed that 'inside causes' within the organisation were more profound than what was visible. Additionally, chapter (5) findings showed a lack of organisational knowledge, competencies, and self-efficacies within the organisation to a certain degree. Similarly, the findings of chapter (6) showed how organisational knowledge, competencies, and self-efficacies within the leadership hindered Org. A from being prepared to respond to the economic crisis.

The next section (7.3) reflects on actions and changes achieved from a first-person (7.3.1), second-person (7.3.2), and lastly from a third-person (7.3.3) perspective.

7.3. Reflection on actions and changes achieved

This section reflects on actions and changes achieved through the AR strategies as shown in (3.4.1) presented through first-, second- and third-person perspectives. As discussed in (7.3.1), one of the primary intentions of this DBA research was to have a jointly built understanding as to why Org. A was losing revenues. Secondly, as discussed through chapter (6), (7.3.1) findings show the first-person AR and the researcher multiple roles in the research process of taking action to resolve the challenging situation together with whom the problem relates within Org. A. Similarly, (7.3.2) findings will show the second-person AR and the researcher's multiple roles in this DBA research exploring "what was really going on?" as discussed through (3.4.1). Lastly, the third-person AR addressed through (7.3.3) shows jointly built strategies within Org. A and to resolve the situation together with whom the problem relates within Org. A, discovered through chapters (5) and (6).

7.3.1. AR cycle 1 (constructing): first-person AR and the researcher multiple roles in the research process

As discussed in (3.4.1), this DBA research began with an observation leading to an inquiring approach to see "what was really going on"? As the primary researcher was an

'insider' and a participant immersed in the actual crisis, the findings from chapters (4), (5) and (6) were unexpected. However, these new findings generated steps to identify new actionable knowledge, as discussed in (7.3.3), to change and resolve the situation together with whom the problem relates to within Org. A.

As the primary researcher, the first step was to discuss the findings with Org. A and its leadership separately. A one-on-one meeting with Org. A's actors was necessary to avoid intimidating the organisation's members when discussing the findings from an organisational perspective. It was also necessary to have a personal meeting with the CEO to protect the leader's image when discussing leadership challenges within the leadership (7.3.2). However, Org. A's team firmly presumed that the drop in oil prices and the government's austerity measures were the primary causes behind its revenue losses and were unprepared to discuss any further findings beyond macro-economic perspectives. Org. A was also unprepared to accept that they neglected to benefit from Tamkeen. Additionally, Org. A firmly presumed that Tamkeen was discriminatory, being unwilling to help foreign-owned organisations to survive and sustain in this challenging economy (meso-economy). Similarly, from the first instance, Org. A's team was critical of the researcher's genuine interest in building the organisation and saw the researcher as a fault finder (8.7).

This hostile atmosphere allowed the researcher to take a different route to not discuss the findings first but start by discussing learnings from the action learning set (knowledge broker). The years of experience working as a commercial manager and now as an SME consultant gave the researcher the necessary confidence and understanding of how to react to such circumstances. This shift in understanding allowed the researcher to play a key role to discuss what these organisations did better, worse, or different than Org. A. Once this was done, it allowed the researcher to discuss Tamkeen's benefits and how Org. A can benefit from Tamkeen like Orgs. B-H. Taking a different route allowed Org. A to understand that for them to learn from other organisations and gain help from Tamkeen, they must first learn to accept that there is a 'genuine' problem within the organisation

and then take the appropriate steps to address the challenging situation. The researcher gained this experience by having worked as a commercial manager when in a difficult situation by applying the Identify, Measure and Implement (IMI) principles.

This understanding allowed Org. A to realise the importance of participative and democratic actions. Org. A realised that to see a 'change' within Org. A, they must be involved in planning, observing, reflecting, and executing the actions towards Org. A's change as shown through (3.4.1). When Org. A's team realised that it is them who will take the lead in identifying actions and implement them with due support from the researcher as the change agent, the atmosphere was positive. Once this climate of positivity was built, Org. A's actors reflected that any actions implemented and the change that comes along with it will be for its betterment, Org. A's actors began to cooperate. This atmosphere allowed the researcher to discuss the findings relating to organisational and leadership challenges within Org. A and its leadership, and that the drop in oil prices and government's austerity measures played a less significant role in Org. A's revenue losses. After that, the discussions were smooth and free-flowing. This collaborative understanding allowed the researcher to play a key role in identifying jointly collaborated new actionable knowledge as discussed through (7.3.3) to resolve the challenging situation and those to whom the problem relates within the organisation (third-person).

In a nutshell, as a participant and the primary researcher within the research, the researcher played three roles, first-, second-and third-person within the research. This section shows how this this knowledge was built.

As shown through (3.4.1), as the primary researcher, the researcher's role began with an observation leading to an inquiring approach to see "what was really going on" (first-person). As discussed, the surprising facts generated through chapters (4), (5) and (6) allowed the researcher to discuss the findings with Org. A's team and its leadership separately to have a jointly built understanding as to why Org. A was losing revenues (second-person). This shift in understanding allowed the researcher to discuss that the

drop in oil prices and the government-imposed austerity measures had no impact on Org. A's revenue losses. Org. A also realised that Tamkeen helps the SME sector irrespective of their ownership and size. Once Org. A understood their involvement in identifying and implementing actions towards building Org. A allowed the researcher to identify jointly agreed actionable knowledge, as discussed through (7.3.3), to resolve the challenging situation and those to whom the problem relates within the organisation (third-person).

The next section (7.3.2) addresses the researcher's role from a second-person AR to uncover unseen roots below wrong traits.

7.3.2. AR cycle 2 (planning action): second-person AR to uncover unseen roots below wrong traits

One of the primary intentions of this DBA research, as shown through chapters (4) and (6) findings and discussed in (3.4.1), was to have a jointly built understanding as to why Org. A was losing revenues. Also, as shown in chapter (6), the aim was to identify actions (7.3.3) to resolve the situation together with whom the problem relates to within Org. A (actionable knowledge). Completing the action learning set meetings with the Org. A's CEO and its team allowed findings to be shared and to be a 'knowledge broker' as well.

In the meeting with Orgs. A-H attendees and shown through (Table 17) and (Figure 17) and (Table 14), it was discussed that the drop in oil prices were cyclical (5.5.3). After the meeting with Org. A's CEO and its finance team, upon reflection, both parties (finance team and the researcher) agreed that the most recent drop in oil prices has not only impacted Org. A (75%), but Orgs. E and G (40%), B and H (20%), F (10%) and C (2.3%) respectively as shown through (4.1.1) findings. Reflecting further on action learning set findings, Org. A's CEO then saw late payments appear to be related to cultural habits and did not significantly impact the entire action learning set as shown through (**Error! Reference source not found.**). On reflection, Org. A's CEO also realised that while in the general business culture there is a preference to deal with their own people, Org. A lacked such a connection, and this was shown through (4.1.4) findings.

Additionally, meetings with Orgs. B-H and external stakeholders allowed Org. A to realise that Tamkeen's business development programme, irrespective of ownership and size, co-finance businesses to grow and develop (4.2.2). After these meetings, Org. A's CEO and its operations team realised that Orgs. B, D, E, G and H have benefitted from Tamkeen's business development and training and wage support programmes (4.2.2) and (4.2.3). Org. A's CEO then understood that the allocation of loans was dependent on an organisation's business needs regardless of the economic environment, size or ownership.

On reflection, Org. A's CEO further realised that Tamkeen's Tamweel+ programme had helped Org. H to expand into four new business areas (4.2.4). The meeting with the operations department reflected that they thought being foreign-owned would mean neglecting to benefit from Tamkeen's coaching and mentoring, through which Org. A would have benefitted and was shown through (5.3.1) and (5.3.2) findings.

Likewise, meetings with Orgs. A-H and external actors showed that government projects were open to all, irrespective of an organisation's ownership and size. After this meeting, discussions with Orgs. A's CEO and its projects team were undertaken, and the two parties (projects team and the researcher) agreed that Orgs. A and G had benefitted from government projects; however, the withdrawal of government projects had not impacted Org. G, unlike Org. A. This was due to the type of project Org. G was awarded (essential) (4.3.1). Reflecting further on the findings with meetings with Orgs. A-H, Org. A's CEO and projects team then saw Orgs. B-H had worked towards their growth by way of Orgs. B, G and H (expansion), Org. E (outsourcing) and (search engine optimisation), Org. F (back-office support for new and forthcoming stock exchanges and analytics), Org. G (energy-saving products and external contracting work) and Org. H (a new pharmacy and laboratory) (4.3.2). On reflection, Org. A's CEO then realised Orgs. B, G and H had carefully focused on expansion plans before growth, whereas Org. A, being too eager to expand into Saudi Arabia, neglected to address this requirement in its business plan, and was shown through (5.4.2) and (5.4.3) findings.

Additionally, reflecting on additional findings with Orgs. A-H, both parties (CEO and the researcher) mutually agreed the absence of leader self-efficacy characteristics had been an additional challenge for Org. A. Reflecting on (6.2.3) findings, the CEO then realised this inability hindered seeking Tamkeen's support. By mutually agreeing and reflecting on additional findings from Orgs. A-H, this allowed discussing why Org. A neglected to benefit from government tenders. These reflections permitted the CEO to realise that this inability was due to Org. A's employees lacking in practical knowledge when dealing with government offices as shown through (5.2.1) and (5.2.2) findings. This meeting also allowed the researcher to share that the Tender Board has been accused of a few malpractices in some instances, but this has not been the actual reason for not benefitting from tender announcements. Additional reflections showed that Org. A's team fell short on strategic and competency skills when drafting the business plan, and this inability hindered expanding its customer base beyond government customers as shown through (5.4.1) findings. The CEO subsequently realised this drawback resulted in not identifying the consequences of moving into Saudi Arabia in an economic crisis, and was shown through (5.2.3), (5.4.2), (5.4.3), (5.5.1) and (5.5.2) findings.

After the group meeting with Org. A's CEO and stakeholders from different departments, meeting the CEO separately allowed to discuss additional findings. This individual meeting allowed the researcher to act as a 'knowledge broker' and share "what was really going on". This personal meeting also allowed the CEO to protect their image when discussing leadership challenges within the leadership. Additionally, this one-on-one meeting helped not to intimidate the organisation's members when discussing the findings from an organisational perspective (7.3.1).

This individual meeting allowed discussing why the CEO was never considered a 'friend' in the business circle (4.1.4). Reflecting on the findings, the researcher and the CEO agreed that this inability was due to the CEO's lack of self-confidence (5.1.1) and poor competency skills (5.1.2). Additionally, this meeting also allowed sharing the findings from Orgs. C and H as to what they did differently to build relationships with the business circle

(5.1.1). On reflection, the CEO then realised that this lack of competency skills resulted in neglecting to seek support from the business circle as shown through (5.2.3) and (6.2.1) findings. Similarly, the CEO also realised a lack of knowledge when selecting its employees (5.1.3) resulted in failure to attract the right talent for Org. A (6.2.2).

The next section (7.3.3) addresses the jointly built strategies within Org. A to resolve the situation together with whom the problem relates within Org. A.

7.3.3. AR cycle 3 (taking action): third-person AR-building up organisational knowledge to avoid following wrong traits in the future

Based on the emergent organisational knowledge presented in chapter (6), this DBA research allowed Org. A to recognise some of the problems presented in chapter (5) and as discussed in (7.3.2). Based on the various findings, several actionable frameworks as discussed in (7.3.3) were put in place for Org. A to address the uncovered traits and to avoid following wrong traits in the future.

These actionable frameworks as shown through (Table 43), (Table 44), (Table 45), (Table 46), (Table 47) and (Table 48) highlight the actions to change and improve practices within suitable timeframes. The actions proposed and agreed upon were contextual and seen in a specific context. These actions helped to support the efforts of this DBA research to create actionable knowledge through participant experiences who were involved in creating these actions. This helped to justify the PAR adopted in this DBA research. The objective was to capture insights to generate tacit knowledge to create new actionable knowledge, ensuring implementation to change and improve practice in areas that needed help. Column (2) shows the planned actions (7.3.2), column (3) highlights actions taken and column (4) reveals the results of action implementation. Time constraints hindered experiencing (AR cycle 4-action evaluation) generated within Org. A, and to measure Org. A's actors' practices and engage with them in the continual adaptation of new knowledge.

By reflecting on the purpose of this DBA research, the context and the literature reviewed allowed contributing actionable knowledge based on participant interpretations of the action learning set's actions and the researcher's reflections and observations. The data analysis process helped to create new actions and knowledge and show where the newly created knowledge can be used, as shown through the below sections.

Improving networking behaviour

A lack of organisational knowledge, competencies and self-efficacies as addressed in (5.1.1), (5.1.2) and (5.2.3) findings was caused by Org. A's CEO finding it challenging to network strategically (6.2.1; Spencer and Spencer, 1993; Cooper, Folta and Woo, 1995; Cronin-Gilmore, 2012; Zheng, Ahsan and DeNoble, 2019). Therefore, as Org. A's consultant, the researcher attempted to build up the networking behaviour based on the leader's experience and analogue to the approach as shown in (Figure 30) and discussed in (6.2.1).

Attracting the right talent for Org. A

A lack of organisational knowledge, competencies and self-efficacies as addressed in (5.1.3) findings were caused by the CEO's inability to attract the right talent for Org. A (6.2.2; Plumbley, 1985; Johnson and Scholes, 1999; Chanda, Bansal and Chanda 2010; Armstrong, 2012; CIPD, 2018). Towards bringing in a change to Org. A to attract the right talent, the researcher identified and agreed on a R&S framework set alongside organisational objectives to improve R&S strategies within Org. A as shown in (Figure 31) and discussed in (6.2.2).

Measures to build a successful relationship with government offices

A lack of organisational knowledge, competencies and self-efficacies as addressed in (5.2.1) and (5.2.2) findings was caused by Org. A's actors lacking 'inside' information, finding it challenging to secure government tenders (6.1.3; Nolan, 1998; Dua, Heil and Wilkins (2011) and (6.2.3; Reich, 2004; Once Acre Fund, 2015). Therefore, as the researcher wanted to bring in a change, it was attempted to introduce effective steps to

build a successful relationship with the government offices as show in (Figure 29) (6.1.3) and (Table 39) and (6.2.3) respectively.

Steps to benefit from Tamkeen's support

A lack of organisational knowledge, competencies and self-efficacies as discussed in (5.3.1) and (5.3.2) findings was caused by the CEO's presumptions that Tamkeen discriminates foreign-owned organisations (6.1.2; Dua, Hail and Wilkins, 2010; Reich, 2014; Oppenheimer, 2015; Ireland, 2019). On further attempts, as Org. A's consultant, the researcher wanted to bring in jointly agreed strategies to Org. A, the ways an organisation can engage with government offices as shown through (Table 39) and was discussed in (6.2.3) findings.

Amending business plan in line with the economic setting

A lack of organisational knowledge, competencies and self-efficacies as discussed in (5.4.1), (5.4.2), (5.4.3), (5.5.1) and (5.5.2) findings was caused by neglecting to amend the business plan in line with the economic setting, addressing the underlying causes related to operating in an economic crisis (6.1.1; Berry, 1998; Ennis, 1998; Hrebiniak, 2005; Čater and Pučko, 2010; Jabbar and Hussein, 2017). As Org. A's consultant, the researcher wanted to bring in changes to Org. A's key activities for effective tried and tested strategies, which were defined through (Table 35) as discussed in (6.1.1).

The next and the last section of this chapter (7.4) discusses the limitations of undertaking this DBA research.

Table 43: Forming business partnerships

S/No	AR Cycle 2-Planning Action	AR Cycle 3-Taking Action	Result of implementation
1	<p>To collaborate with like-minded business entities outside of Bahrain that offer similar or differing services in line with Org. A's business interests as discussed in (4.3.2).</p> <p>Forming business partnerships with external business entities as displayed in (Figure 27) and discussed in (6.2.1).</p>	<p>Formed five business partnerships as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 28-Mar-2018-signed MoU with Fluxcion, The Netherlands 2. 17-April-2018-signed MoU with Mundhir Al-Barwani (MAB), Sultanate of Oman 3. 30-May-2018-signed MoU with Professional Evaluation and Certification Board (PECB), Montreal, Canada 4. 15-July-2018-signed MoU with Arabian Al-Kanarr Co Ltd, Saudi Arabia 5. 21-July-2018-signed MoU with ThreatMark s.r.o (Ltd), Brno, Czech Republic 	<p>When submitting this DBA research, Org. A had formed business partnerships with five like-minded businesses that offer similar or differing services in line with Org. A's business interests (Appendix E.1). However, Org. A must strive hard to expand this circle.</p>
2	<p>To collaborate with like-minded business entities within Bahrain that offer similar or differing services in line with Org. A's business interests as discussed through (4.3.2).</p> <p>Forming ties with available contacts as displayed in (Figure 27) and discussed in (6.2.1).</p>	<p>Discussions were in progress to form business partnerships with two local organisations in Bahrain that offer similar of differing services in line with Org. A's interests.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. TechnoServ for IT Solutions 2. TechnoPath Solutions 	<p>When submitting this DBA research, the following actions were in progress:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. TechnoServ-MoU signed, and discussions were in progress on joint marketing and collaborative activities. 2. TechnoPath-MoU signed, and discussions were in progress on joint marketing and collaborative activities.
3	<p>To appoint sales agents within the region to sell Org. A's services on a commission-sharing basis.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CEO to identify potential business partners in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia to promote Org. A's business interests. 2. OM to contact possible partners and undertake awareness sessions to identify potential clients to promote Org. A's business interests. 	<p>When submitting this DBA research, the following actions were in progress:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discussions were in progress to identify potential business partners in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia to promote Org. A's business interests. 2. Identified Industrial and Management Technology Methods (ITM) in Saudi Arabia, and discussions were progressing to sign an MoU. 3. Discussions were in progress with OM reaching out to potential clients in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia to promote Org. A's business interests.

Table 44: Improving networking behaviour

S/No	AR Cycle 2-Planning Action	AR Cycle 3-Taking Action	Result of implementation
1	To formulate operational benefits: ties providing advice on venture strategies as displayed in (Figure 27) and discussed in (6.2.1).	CEO or a CEO-nominated employee to accept a voluntary role as a Committee Member of the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) and: 1. To become a preferred partner for other BCCI members 2. To collaborate with BCCI on a networking platform 3. To receive news of new governmental services and benefits which are being announced to BCCI members 4. To participate in consultative platforms for government regulations	Through BCCI's rigorous evaluation process, Org. A's CEO was absorbed into the BCCI Technical Committee. When submitting this DBA research, the CEO had attended two committee meetings (Appendix E.2). By being a member of the Technical Committee, allows Org. A to: 1. Receive news of new governmental services and benefits announced to BCCI members. 2. Generate the ability to participate in consultative platforms for government regulations.
2	To formulate symbolic benefits: ties providing reputational value as displayed in (Figure 27) and discussed in (6.2.1).	To obtain membership in the following social clubs where elites gather: 1. American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) 2. Bahrain British Business Forum (BBBF) 3. The Capital Club	The CEO obtained memberships in the following social clubs where elites gather (Appendix E.2). 1. American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) 2. Bahrain British Business Forum (BBBF) 3. The Capital Club
3	CEO to formulate network-broadening actions: active search for new ties as displayed in (Figure 27) and discussed in (6.2.1).	To formulate network-broadening actions, SM and OM to work collaboratively: 1. To obtain details of potential clients through Chamber of Commerce, AmCham, Bahrain British Business Forum industry databases. 2. To obtain a subscription of prospect engagement applications (Mail Chimp) and compile and distribute marketing messages. 3. To use personal contacts to approach organisations and perform proof of concept demonstrations on the value that Org. A's services can add. A proof of concept (POC) focusses on determining an idea to turn into a reality.	When submitting this DBA research, the following actions were in progress: 1. To obtain details of potential clients through Chamber of Commerce, AmCham, Bahrain British Business Forum industry databases. 2. Obtained a subscription to Mail Chimp and compiled and distributed marketing messages (Appendix E.2). 3. To use personal contacts to approach organisations and perform proof of concept demonstrations on the value that Org. A's services can add value.

Table 45: Attracting the right talent

S/No	AR Cycle 2-Planning Action	AR Cycle 3-Taking Action	Result of implementation
1	To formulate a Recruitment and Selection (R&S) framework set alongside organisational objectives as displayed in (Figure 28) and discussed in (6.2.2).	CEO to formulate a R&S framework set alongside Org. A's objectives.	Formulated a R&S framework set alongside Org. A's objectives as displayed in (Appendix F.1).
2	To formulate Policies and Procedures manuals relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment and Selection (R&S) Policy • Harassment and Discrimination Policy • Compensation and Benefits Policy • Ethics and Conducts Policy • Disciplinary Policy 	Introduced Policies and Procedures manuals relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment and Selection (R&S) Policy • Harassment and Discrimination Policy • Compensation and Benefits Policy • Ethics and Conducts Policy • Disciplinary Policy 	Introduced Policies and Procedures manuals as displayed in (Appendix F.2).
3	To communicate Org. A's corporate strategy to its employees as discussed in (6.2.2).	CEO communicated Org. A's corporate strategy to its employees.	When submitting this DBA research, the CEO briefed its employees on Org. A's services and strategies. The CEO also decided that this meeting would be a bi-weekly event, and in the absence of the CEO, the OM is to chair the meeting. Minutes of the meeting to be recorded and shared with its employees.
4	To align Org. A's employees' goals with Org. A's strategic goals as discussed in (6.2.2).	To align Org. A's employees' goals with its strategic goals by way of training and achieving quality standard certificates in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISO 27001 - IT Security • ISO 22301 - Business Continuity • ISO 9001 - Quality Management System Apart from the CEO, the CEO also selected two Senior Consultants to undergo quality standard certification training. Funds for Bahraini employees is through Tamkeen's Certification programme.	When submitting this DBA research, the CEO and two Senior Consultants obtained the following certifications as displayed in (Appendix F.3): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISO 22301 - Business Continuity • ISO 27001 - IT Security • ISO 9001 - Quality Management System - is in progress Tamkeen, through its Certification Programme approved funds for Bahraini employees.
5	To create an incentive programme to motivate Org. A's employees as discussed in (5.1.3) and (6.2.2).	To motivate Org. A's employees; the CEO is to introduce an incentive programme across Org. A. Introducing a performance bonus policy and not an incentive policy that applies only to the sales force will not discriminate its back-office staff (administrative).	Introduced a Performance Appraisal Policy addressing all its employees as displayed in (Appendix F.4).

Table 46: Gaining access to government offices' operational procedures

S/No	AR Cycle 2-Planning Action	AR Cycle 3-Taking Action	Result of implementation
1	To register with the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) and obtain the business membership category.	To register with BCCI and obtain the business membership.	Registered with BBCCI and obtained the business membership category as displayed in (Appendix G.1).
2	To register and shortlist Org. A with the Bahrain Tender Board (BTB) as a potential bidder.	To register and shortlist Org. A with BTB as a potential bidder.	Registered and shortlisted Org. A with BTB as a potential bidder as displayed in (Appendix G.2).

Table 47: Benefit from external financial support

S/No	AR Cycle 2-Planning Action	AR Cycle 3-Taking Action	AR Cycle 4-Evaluating Action
1	To register Org. A with Tamkeen and be familiar with its funding programmes as displayed in (Table 36) and discussed in (6.2.3).	• To register Org. A under Tamkeen's Business Development Programme as discussed in (4.2.2).	Registered Org. A under Tamkeen's Business Development Programme as displayed in (Appendix H.1).
		• To register Org. A under Tamkeen's Wage Subsidy Support Programme as discussed in (4.2.3).	Registered Org. A under Tamkeen's Wage Support Programme as displayed in (Appendix H.2).
2	To register Org. A with Tamkeen Bahrain to receive invitations for coaching and mentoring events as displayed in (Table 36) and discussed in (6.2.3).	• To register Org. A with Tamkeen Bahrain to receive invitations for coaching and mentoring events as discussed in (4.2.6).	Registered Org. A with Tamkeen's coaching and mentoring events as displayed in (Appendix H.3).
3	To appoint a dedicated person who can regularly visit government offices as displayed in (Table 36) and discussed in (6.2.3).	CEO to appoint a dedicated person who can regularly visit government offices (weekly basis), and upon return, this person must provide a report outlining: 1. Government tender announcements and Org. A's ability to participate in them. 2. Tamkeen's updated funding programmes and Org. A's ability to benefit from these programmes.	When submitting this DBA research, the CEO advised the OM to weekly visit government offices and, upon return, to submit the following reports. 1. Government tender announcements and Org. A's ability to participate in them. 2. Tamkeen's updated funding programmes and Org. A's ability to benefit from these programmes.
	To appoint a dedicated person who can regularly visit networking events.	CEO to appoint a dedicated person who will regularly visit networking events. This is in addition to the CEO attending networking events where elites gather. Upon return, this appointee is to provide a report as follows: • Number of events attended, and its benefits to Org. A. • To identify competitor reactive strategies and what Org. A must do to curtail these measures. • New entrants to the market and how competitive they can be towards Org. A. • To contact potential clients and explain Org. A's services - how many clients were contacted and the client feedback. • To conduct presentations on Org. A's services and plan proof of concept - how many client presentations were carried out and what was the audience response.	In addition to the CEO attending networking events where elites gather, the CEO appoints a dedicated person who will regularly visit other networking events. Upon return, this person is to provide a report: • Number of networking events attended and its benefits to Org. A. • To identify competitor strategies and what Org. A must do to curtail these measures. • New entrants in the market and how competitive they can be towards Org. A. • To contact potential clients and explain Org. A's services, how many of them were contacted, and the feedback. • To conduct presentations on Org. A's services and plan proof of concept - how many client presentations were carried out and the audience response.

Table 48: Amending the business plan

S/No	AR Cycle 2-Planning Action	AR Cycle 3-Taking Action	Result of implementation
1	<p>To re-define Org. A's business plan on the short- and medium-term activities, including:</p> <p>1a. To focus on enhancing brand visibility</p>	<p>Org. A is to participate in the following major IT exhibitions yearly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International IT and Telecommunication Exhibition (COMEX) Technology Show – April (year), Muscat, Sultanate of Oman. • International Data Corporation (IDC) Chief Information Officer (CIO) Summit – September (year), Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. • Gulf Information Technology Exhibition (GITEX) – October (year), Dubai, United Arab Emirates. 	<p>When submitting this DBA research, Org. A participated in two major IT exhibitions, as displayed in (Appendix I.1).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Data Corporation (IDC) Chief Information Officer (CIO) Summit – September (2018 and 2019), Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. • Gulf Information Technology Exhibition (GITEX) – October (2017 and 2017 and 2018), Dubai, United Arab Emirates. <p>Plans were underway to participate in the COMEX exhibition in the following year.</p>
		<p>Org. A to organise breakfast mornings targeting CXOs and business leaders to share thoughts and guidance on emerging technologies and case studies. The purpose is to educate CXOs on technologies aligned with Org. A's consulting services and educate the market.</p>	<p>When submitting this DBA research, Org. A held four breakfast mornings for CXOs and business leaders to share thoughts and guidance on emerging technologies and case studies. Org. A sought help from an event management company to organise these events as displayed in (Appendix I.2).</p>
		<p>Org. A is to organise a wide range of community outreach activities aligned with its business model to reach a wider audience by focusing on the community's challenges. This awareness should provide details on the cybersecurity services and link to the security incidents within Bahrain to raise awareness.</p>	<p>When submitting this DBA research, Org. A had conducted 20 presentations on 'minimising cybersecurity risks through employee awareness'. These presentations provided details on the cybersecurity services and linked them to the security incidents within Bahrain, demonstrating how awareness can minimise risks, as displayed through (Appendix I.3). These awareness sessions are to continue.</p>
	<p>To re-define Org. A's business plan focussing on short- and medium-term activities including:</p> <p>1b. To appoint an advertising and marketing agency to maximise Org. A's brand visibility</p>	<p>To maximise Org. A's brand visibility, to appoint an advertising and marketing agency to address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website design and implementation by way of providing a new look • To advertise Org. A's services through multiple social media channels • To give a new look for the company profile • To design and print brochures • To select a concept and design artwork for press releases (English and Arabic) • Media buying - social media, Eastern province, Riyadh and Jeddah in Saudi Arabia 	<p>When submitting this DBA research, as displayed in (Appendix I.4), Org. A had taken the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointed an advertising and marketing agency • Website re-designed, giving it a new look • Advertised Org. A's services through multiple social media channels - Facebook, Instagram and Twitter
2	<p>To re-define Org. A's business plan on the short- and medium-term activities to reach out to many potential customers.</p>	<p>To reach out to many potential customers, Org. A must re-define its business plan focussing on short- and medium-term activities, and it must be a jointly collaborated activity among its team focussing on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To review and reverse the market and the competitor strategies. • To perform a SWOT analysis to identify market pricing. • To expand the marketing strategies to reach many potential customers. 	<p>When submitting this DBA research, the CEO, OM, SM and MM had two brainstorming sessions on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing the market and competitor strategies and identified actions to be taken. • Performing a SWOT analysis to identify market pricing. • Discussing expanding the marketing strategies to reach many potential customers. <p>However, implementing and measuring these activities take a longer period.</p>

S/No	AR Cycle 2-Planning Action	AR Cycle 3-Taking Action	AR Cycle 4-Evaluating Action
3	To re-define Org. A's business plan on the short- and medium-term activities to turn strategy into action.	<p>To re-define Org. A's business plan on the short- and medium-term activities; the CEO to implement a jointly collaborated Action Plan (quarterly, bi-yearly and yearly) focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific responsibilities and accountabilities on strategy implementation. • To adopt metrics to monitor the strategy implementation. • To appoint a committee consisting of senior leadership and senior consultants to drive and monitor strategies. 	<p>When submitting this DBA research, the CEO, OM, SM and MM had one brainstorming session outlining a detailed Action Plan (quarterly, bi-yearly and yearly) focussing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific responsibilities and accountabilities on strategy implementation. • To adopt metrics to monitor the strategy implementation. • To appoint a committee consisting of senior leadership and senior consultants to drive and monitor strategies. <p>However, implementing and measuring these activities take an extended period.</p>
4	To re-define Org. A's business plan on the short- and medium-term activities to include new services targeting the oil and gas sector in Saudi Arabia.	<p>To re-define Org. A's business plan on the short- and medium-term activities; the CEO is to identify a collaborative exercise to identify new services targeting the oil and gas sector in Saudi Arabia focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To conduct a market survey to identify the demand for new services in line with Org. A's business model. The new areas are to focus on cost-saving and automation. • To further enhance the IT Security Governance consulting services. Studies have shown that information technology plays a pivotal role and that there is an increasing need for IT Governance in the region. Executing a holistic IT governance model facilitates IT to deliver business value and increases confidence with business. 	<p>When submitting this DBA research, the CEO, OM, SM and MM had one brainstorming session to identify new services targeting the oil and gas sector in Saudi Arabia.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To conduct a market survey to identify the demand for new services in line with Org. A's business model. The new areas are to focus on cost-saving and automation. A comparison between the previous market research and industry directions focussing on cost-saving and automation was in progress. • Added new services to Org. A's portfolio is displayed in (Appendix I.5). <p>* Robotic Process Automation (RPA) * ISO27001 - Information Security Management * ISO22301 - Business Continuity Planning * ISO9001 - Quality Management System</p>

7.4. Limitations of undertaking this DBA research

Implementing the AR stages in this DBA research contained overlapping stages of going back and forth in inquiring, acting, and reflecting. This process evolved a participatory paradigmatic approach where participants jointly built strategies and reviewed the implemented steps. To sustain the relevance of this DBA research to create new actionable knowledge, engaging within the local context was based on facts gathered from participant experiences. In doing so, it was necessary to impose several limitations in selecting action learning set participants. The primary limit was selecting comparable, independent and diversified small and medium organisations that might have experienced the drop in oil prices. The next limit was selecting those organisations who had experienced a similar crisis in the past. The next step focused on participants' decision-making capabilities who could argue or challenge one's thoughts. An added limitation was that participants must know how much the current drop in oil prices impacts their organisation and the economy in general. The rest of the participants who did not fit into these criteria were excluded.

The PAR process engaged in learning by doing. In this aspect, leaving out participants with limited or no experience when the engagement was aimed at all stakeholders to design and implement actions is a regret. This DBA research recognised the importance of collaborative knowledge building to turn information and practical knowledge through practice. However, given another opportunity to reflect on the practical change being the core requirement of this DBA research, the focus will be on a collegiate participatory approach. This focus allows stakeholders to reach deeper to identify the problem, design solutions, and act and reflect on implementation that contributes to developing loop learning.

Another critical limitation of this DBA research is that it does not generate knowledge for general applications. The knowledge created is for direct implementation limited to a specific context within Org. A that required involving actors within one particular and practical context. However, it can apply in a different context, but this will require careful

adaptation. Some researchers might see this as a limitation; however, AR is a critical feature as a research strategy.

An added limitation was time constraints to experience the implementation of all actionable cycles and to measure Org. A's actors' practices and engage with them in the continual adaptation of new knowledge. In reality, PAR has no end date and a clear timeline for stopping the research; research stops upon resolving the problem. Another limitation is the inability to compel knowledge through a broader organisational perspective in other organisations that value advice from their in-house consultants.

Subjectivity was another limitation. When left unchecked, there is a tendency for the researcher to be over-involved to the extent of exposing personal biases to play an active role in analysis and findings. This was solved by seeking opinions and thoughts from comparable, diversified and independent action learning sets. Also, frameworks as in (Table 21) and some key literature strengthened the findings. Also, the collective research strategies (3.4) and a narrative analysis (3.4.4) helped reproduce the participants' and the researcher's stories into a readable format to create a joint statement.

Another limitation is being vulnerable to pressure when the researcher is an 'insider' in the organisation, which can compel the researcher to fabricate or alter the findings to suit organisational objectives. This was solved by integrating four previously tried and tested frameworks as shown through (Table 21) to interpret chapters (4), (5) and (6) findings. Also, the AR process used in the DBA research was a robust methodology to collect and deal with the data, and so were the carefully selected other research methods to strengthen findings.

The next and the last chapter in this DBA research reflects on the learning journey.

Chapter 8: Reflections on the learning journey

This chapter is divided into eight sections. (8.1) reflects on the implications of the researcher as an ‘insider’ and a participant immersed in the actual crisis. This is followed by (8.2) discussing the impact of the work on Org. A’s behaviour since concluding this DBA research. (8.3) discusses the implications for the broader community or to whom this DBA research is relevant and is followed by exploring the extent to which this DBA research represents actionable knowledge when addressing similar challenges in the future (8.4). This chapter also confirms or extends the theory based as a result of the revised literature as shown through (8.5), followed by discussing the researcher’s development as a scholar-practitioner and the learning journey (8.6). The next section (8.7) addresses the challenges encountered when compiling this DBA research and ends with recommendations for future research (8.8).

8.1. Researcher as an insider and a participant immersed in the actual crisis

When the journey began, the initial presumptions were that the vast amount of the researcher’s professional experience having worked as a consultant would help to improve SME challenges. It was also assumed that having experience working as a commercial manager would help get things done in the industry. However, these thoughts were often challenging given the opinions and presumptions held on the research topic.

Initially, Org. A presumed its revenue losses since June 2014 were due to the drop in oil prices leading to an economic crisis, which generated a considerable budget deficit in the government coffers. Another presumption was that Tamkeen had ceased financial and advisory support to foreign-owned organisations. These initial presumptions allowed the problem to be looked at from a managerial perspective (consultant). Koontz (1961, p. 186) finds “management is the art of getting things done through and with people in formally organised groups, the art of creating an environment in such an organised group where people can perform as individuals and yet cooperate toward attainment of group goals, the art of removing blocks to such performance, the art of optimising efficiency in effectively reaching goals.” Similarly, drawing on the Taylorist approach, Uddin and

Hossain (2015) see management as an art of knowing what to do, when to do it and the best way to address the pre-determined goals. Comparing these two approaches with AR and Action Learning (AL), these approaches seem quite closely knit. It was not intended to say that these two approaches do not work towards an organisation's change. They do, but these approaches depend on pre-designed processes to fix plans and implement them. This shift in understanding was allowed to play an active role in looking into any possible causes within Org. A and engage with it to adopt a jointly built understanding (7.3.2) of why it was losing revenues. This understanding generated a new experience that being an 'insider' and a participant and immersed in the actual crisis (inquiry from the inside) (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014; Raelin, 2015) generates new actionable knowledge (double-loop learning) (Argyris and Schon, 1978). Cooperrider (2017) says being critically reflective of one's practices and learning through it brings progress.

The following section (8.2) discusses the impact of the work of Org. A's behaviour since concluding this DBA research.

8.2. Impact of the work on Org. A's behaviour since concluding this DBA research

This section reflects on insights into the actionability of the knowledge generated from this DBA research. Hordijk and Baud (2006) say that the newly created knowledge will remain static if researchers neglect to build suitable channels to link with a broader community that could benefit from findings, including the participants who helped to build this DBA research (Nolan and Varey, 2003). One crucial achievement through this DBA research was the collaborative involvement of various stakeholders, not limited to the action learning set but the government actors who helped shape the findings. This involvement allowed understanding how collective participation helped produce a successful outcome towards the benefit of multiple stakeholders.

The AR strategies presented through the first-, second- and third-person perspectives, as shown in (3.4.1) and discussed in (7.3.1), show that the primary intention of this DBA

research was to have a jointly built understanding of why Org. A was losing revenues. Secondly, as discussed through chapter (6) and (7.3.1), the findings showed that first-person AR and the researcher multiple roles in the research process take actions to resolve the challenging situation together and with whom the problem relates within Org. A. Similarly, (7.3.2) findings showed the second-person AR and the researcher's multiple roles in this DBA research exploring "what was really going on?". Lastly, the third-person AR addressed through (7.3.3) showed jointly built strategies (actionable frameworks) within Org. A and how to resolve the situation together with whom the problem relates within Org. A as discovered through chapters (5) and (6).

These actionable frameworks as shown through (Table 43), (Table 44), (Table 45), (Table 46), (Table 47) and (Table 48) highlight the actions to change and improve practices within suitable timeframes. The 4th column of these frameworks show the result of implementations. This column shows the researcher as a change agent having managed to embed a of climate of positivity within Org. A that the change is for its betterment. This has resulted in bringing concrete improvements for Org. A, and it is in a better position post-2014. This evidences that the new knowledge improves practices. The challenge is to ensure that the newly generated knowledge is continuous for further improvements, which is achieved through periodical reflections before the next crisis. A collective ownership helps to mitigate any future challenges.

The following section (8.3) discusses implications for the broader community that could benefit from this DBA research.

8.3. Implications for the broader community

This section discusses the implications of the findings for the broader community that could benefit from this DBA research.

8.3.1. *Small and medium organisations*

The actionable frameworks as shown through (Table 43), (Table 44), (Table 45), (Table 46), (Table 47) and (Table 48) serve as platform of actionable frameworks for small and medium organisations to deal with complex situations operating under similar economic crises. Knowledge gained through this DBA research can help stakeholders build their skills and competencies, helping to address complex organisational and leadership challenges. However, these organisations must remember that the knowledge generated through this DBA research is not a one-stop solution for all the challenges; it can apply in a different context, but this will require careful adaptation.

An additional implication of this DBA research is to remind small and medium organisations to re-work existing diffused and undiffused knowledge to form collaborative understanding. Another implication is that for organisations that operate under similar economic crises, internal adjustments and flexibility prepare these organisations to address multiple challenges across all industries.

8.3.2. Management practice

Understanding the consequences of presuming that only ‘outside causes’ lead to organisations’ revenue or profit losses prevents exploring possible ‘inside causes’ that could be mostly responsible for an organisation’s revenue losses. Furthermore, it is also essential to understand the importance of implementing a top-down AR implementation stage and the importance of a collaborative action design.

8.3.3. For policymakers

To raise awareness that support systems are working transparently and coherently with no external biases, policymakers should implement policies and procedures advocated by the government to provide opportunities for existing SMEs to sustain and grow (INNO-Grips, 2011), and these policies should also support and grow SMEs. Similarly, these policymakers should encourage sustainable growth and provide a broader range of target business sectors not limited to a single market seeing beyond Bahrain. Additionally, these policymakers should also compile a robust financial structure, considering the size and

earning capacity of the SMEs, not having a flat system applicable to all the SMEs, and advance SMEs' knowledge through coaching and mentoring.

8.3.4. To the local community

Raising awareness that a drop in oil prices will result in a higher government deficit and lower government spending, significantly impacting job creation within the country, as most of the available private sector jobs are based on government contracts. A drop in oil prices means less drilling and exploration activities. This means fewer actions, and that can lead to layoffs, hurting local businesses.

8.3.5. Recent major developments

However, the Bahrain government recently imposed a few measures to boost the economy to mitigate the challenges associated with the drop in oil prices following the economic crisis.

Vision 2030

The most important policy document for economic evolution in Bahrain is Vision 2030, organised around three guiding principles: *sustainability*, *competitiveness* and *fairness*. It discusses a series of economic and institutional reforms to shift Bahrain from an economy built on oil to an economy driven by the private sector (EDB, 2018). *Sustainability*: with a significant strain on government coffers, this policy document discusses that by 2030, the private sector should be the primary economic driver of Bahrain. *Competitiveness*: this sector focuses on driving economic growth; increasing productivity should be in a competitive environment and can only achieve this through employees having the right skills and attitudes. This document also states that Bahrain can achieve this by going to great lengths to educate and train its workforce. *Fairness*: this policy discusses a free and fair competitive environment for both public and private sectors relating to employment, land or government tenders.

Growing the non-oil sectors

Several other sectors drive Bahrain's growth, tourism being the biggest one, followed by the hotel and restaurant sectors. The government decided to expand these business sectors by 5% (EDB, 2018).

Economic aid packages

In October 2018, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the UAE announced a US\$10 billion economic aid package for Bahrain (Mogielnicki, 2018). With the support of these aid packages, the Bahrain government expects to address the budget deficit and mitigate the negative impacts of the austerity steps it has on the economy. Mogielnicki (2018) further adds that the drop in oil prices impacted Bahrain's public finances, as nearly 75% of government revenues depend on hydrocarbons. This economic aid package has helped boost Bahrain's economic outlook from negative to stable (Oxford Business Group, 2018).

Quota system for government tenders

In 2018, Bahrain's government decided that 10% of all government tenders must be awarded to the SME sector. This move encourages the government's effort to promote and expedite entrepreneurship (Al-Mukharriq, 2019). This new move allows the SME sector to have greater access to all government tenders irrespective of the ownership and size.

The following section (8.4) discusses the extent to which this DBA research represents actionable knowledge when addressing similar challenges in the future.

8.4. Actionable knowledge when addressing similar challenges in the future

This DBA research explored several findings when addressing similar challenges in the future.

As indicated through (1.2), Org. A presumed 'outside causes' associated with the drop in oil prices and the economic crisis were the core causes behind its revenue losses. This prevented it from investigating possible 'inside causes' within Org. A that could have been

mostly responsible for its revenue losses. Analogous to the 'dot-com bubble' findings, as shown through chapters (4) and (5), unseen causes were more profound than what was visible and showed how Org. A's actors neglected to understand the common market rules, which has led to hidden roots behind its revenue losses.

This DBA research also showed the importance of networking for advice and support, and the consequences of neglecting this important activity and how it can adversely impact an organisation. Due to their inability to link entrepreneurially in the organisation's early days, business leaders lose crucial resources flown through the network. To be productive, the leader must be proactive, grow and reach a broader business circle.

This DBA research also showed that to improve practices in areas that needed help, it is important to implement a top-down AR implementation stage and a collaborative action design through participant experiences. The focus should be on resolving the challenging situation together with whom the problem relates to within the organisation. Also, the actions used to improve practices must have suitable timeframes. Additionally, measuring participants' practices and engaging with them in the continual adaptation generates new actionable knowledge.

The following section (8.5) addresses the impact on research confirmation on theory base.

8.5. Impact on research confirmation on theory base and contribution to literature

This section shows the revised literature set alongside findings from this DBA research and whether the findings were confirmed or extended, contrasted or were unexpected.

The findings of this DBA research following the revised literature, as discussed in chapter (2), showed that (2.3.1), (2.3.2), (2.3.3) and (2.3.4) findings were largely or somewhat related to but were not directly impacting foreign-owned organisations in Bahrain.

However, there were no findings alongside (2.3.5), (2.3.6), (2.3.7) and (2.3.8) that directly impacted small or medium organisations in Bahrain irrespective of the ownership or size.

This DBA research began by seeing the current economic crisis through similar past economic crises. Observing the current economic crisis through the 'dot-com bubble' crisis, as told by Elliot (2004), Lewis (2020) and Smith (2012), the initial findings showed that Org. A was mesmerised by new and unproven business ideas, neglected to adhere to standard market rules, and ignored the unseen roots below wrong traits. Agreeing with Smith (2012), additional findings were that Org. A neglected to amend its business plan to respond in a timely manner to market warnings and market pulling drives, which lead to poorly informed decisions.

An additional observation was that Org. A, to some extent, felt government regulatory practices, as told by Injaz (2013), were hindering them from benefitting from Tamkeen's loans. However, they were not the actual reasons that they were not benefitting from government help. Findings from this DBA research also confirmed that foreign organisations could not secure sub-contracted offers because the poor-quality market infrastructure placed these organisations in a weaker position than larger organisations (Nixon, 2000; JETRO, 2015). Another observation was finding the right workforce with the right skills and attitudes (Terentyev, 2014; Ershova, 2017). Additionally, discriminatory treatment favouring the local organisations over foreign organisations, as seen by BBC (2011), was observed in some sectors.

This DBA research also showed the importance of networking for advice and emotional support; the consequences of neglecting this vital activity can adversely impact an organisation (Bruderl and Preisendorfer, 1998; Freeman, 1999). Hite and Hesterly (2001) and Slotte-Kock and Coviello (2009) say that new organisations in the early stage of their business can benefit from a network. Das and Teng (1998) noted that networking is an excellent way to tap into the vital talent and market information and should be a continuous effort and should not stop at any stage, even when the organisation is stable.

Singh et al. (1999) also said networking is an excellent platform for business leaders who hail from the information technology sector with weak ties to improve. Interestingly, Bruderl and Preisendorfer (1998) said that solid relations could not measure entrepreneurial success if its leader neglects to implement the right action at the right time. Similarly, findings from this DBA research observed that GCC business leaders, due to mutual religious and cultural beliefs, shy away from forming business relations with foreigners and restrict their network among GCC nationals (Ghauri and Fang 2001; Ourfali, 2015; Najm, 2015).

This section also shows, as a result, that the revised literature confirmed some findings of this DBA research.

Through this DBA research's findings and as told by Arditi and Chotibhongs (2005), Massoud, Saunders and Scholnick (2011) and Young (2018), the observations were that late payment was a norm, but informal agreements among the contractors were standard to get paid.

Additionally, agreeing with Doz and Kosonen (2010), the findings of this DBA research confirmed that organisations collapse not because they do something wrong but because they were continuously following the same old strategies for a long time. However, Quinn (1999) and Crawford and Nahmias (2010) say constantly acquiring new knowledge is vital for incremental improvements. However, this depends on, as told by Bertoldi et al. (2018), the knowledge leader's readiness once it comes to a changing organisational environment. This readiness leads to deliberate reforms, maintaining the strategic advantage to generate value on an organisation's business model (Doz and Kosonen, 2010).

Additionally, this DBA research addressed the significance of planning and how it links to growth, as Blackburn, Hart and Wainwright (2013) explained. Planning should be a continuous cycle, and as this DBA research's findings showed, planning comes with

experience working in different working environments, as seen by Jabbar and Hussein (2017). Having strategies only will not meet an organisation's needs if the organisation neglects to implement them. Farsight Leadership Organisation (2007) said that 80% of organisations have the right strategies, yet only 14% implement them, and Al-Ghamdi (1998) says this is due to a lack of coordination.

This DBA research also discovered an absence of leadership competencies within Org. A's leadership as a significant challenge for Org. A. Kiggundu (2002) and Sarwoko et al. (2013) saw the importance of robust entrepreneurial characteristics to improve business performance. However, Westerberg et al. (1997), Markman (2007) and Ahmad et al. (2010) say having all these characteristics will not guarantee running a business successfully but having one or more helps to know the future. Interestingly, Osborne (1993) says leader competency is not essential to running a business, but what is important is the leader's personality underlying the business model. As observed through findings from this DBA research, Bandura (1977) said that leaders high in self-efficacy undertake challenging tasks and complete them well.

Even though the revised literature confirmed or extended some findings, this DBA research also generated some unexpected findings.

Initially, Org. A presumed its revenue losses since June 2014 were due to the drop in oil prices leading to an economic crisis, but Basha (2014) said changing oil prices negatively impacts an organisation's performance. However, UIHaq (2017) said, even with a drop in oil prices, an organisation's revenue could still grow; however, high operating costs reduce the profit margins, resulting in losing investor and customer trust (Pindyck, 1991; Killian and Lee, 2014).

Even though the revised literature confirmed or extended some findings, this DBA research also explored some contrasting findings as well.

Findings from this DBA research also showed that Org. A neglecting to carry out a feasibility study before moving into Saudi Arabia did not generate the expected results. Burke, Fraser and Green (2010) and Delmar and Shane (2003) say that to improve decision making, it is important to have a written business plan at the initial stage of a new product or service launch, but Bhidé (2000) says that this has been unsuccessful in weak markets.

This DBA research also showed how government actions could impact an organisation's economic value, not limited to enforcing laws. Dua, Hail and Wilkins (2010) argue government actions will not be as effective as other actions but play an influential role in an organisation's finances. However, to reap the maximum benefits from the government, as Blount (2015) said, an organisation must build a good relationship with the government to be aware of its benefits extended to the organisations.

The revised literature also incorporated the networking approach (2.6.1) and outlined its relevance to this DBA research. Where Org. A's challenges were concerned; findings from this DBA research showed higher applicability of the networking approach (2.6.1).

The following section (8.6) shows the researcher's development as a scholar-practitioner and the learning journey.

8.6. The researcher's development as a scholar-practitioner and the learning journey

This section shows the researchers' achievements, developments and milestones reached when developing this DBA research.

The proudest moment was the ability to construct organic research based on original data. The next achievement was the ability to involve stakeholders as full partners in a mutual learning process and collaborative knowledge development and action design that can be put into practice.

As the primary researcher and participant, constructing this DBA research allowed learning in new areas. Coghlan and Brannick (2014) say that encouraging active stakeholder participation requires multiple research modalities, including dialogue skills and inquiry typology. As the primary researcher, these skills facilitated the action learning set and other stakeholders to share their experiences to generate actionable knowledge (March, Sproull and Tamuz, 1991). Attending two workshops in the UAE helped to build these skills. Additionally, maturity in engaging in collaborative dialogues in this action-oriented DBA research allowed openness to work with critical feedback (Rigg, Ellwood and Anderson, 2021). Examining this knowledge through collaborative discussions created a solid foundation to identify and implement practical interventions. Another skill was learning to manage the time well, ensuring work is done on time, prioritising essential tasks, and identifying different styles that suit best. Also, completing this DBA research helped in learning presentation skills and to overcome the fear of public speaking. Staying motivated throughout this DBA research was a significant challenge, especially when pushing through emotions to meet goals.

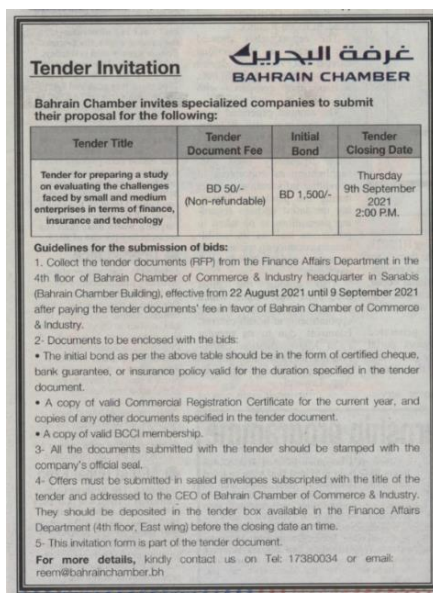
Even though doing DBA research was primarily an independent undertaking, this journey allowed working with others. This means learning to listen to others and compromise with the external stakeholders. Writing effectively, ensuring accuracy, conciseness, and engagement, was an added skill developed during this DBA research. Working on a new research topic allowed the researcher to be creative, an underrated skill often underreported. An added skill discovered when building this DBA research was exploring and learning new data analysis and coding methods. Likewise, the ability to strengthen fact-gathering and research abilities allowed research skills to be improved. All these skills learned during building this DBA research were of help to develop publishing skills.

Similarly, learning a new form of research was another milestone in constructing this DBA research. Being accustomed to traditional research as an outsider, seeking to generate knowledge without influence did not cause the vital force. Learning to accept criticism and being professionally responsive to this group of knowledgeable people (peers) who were

often critical and challenging was an added milestone attained in constructing this DBA research. However, it was surprising that this group of people later led the research and became active participants.

An added achievement was the action learning set participants seeing the positive changes within Org. A post-2014. They saw that the new knowledge has improved practices and allowed enabled two contracts from two action learning set participant organisations to be secured. Additionally, sharing emerging actionable knowledge built on Bahraini SMEs with the BCCI led to being selected for one of their executive committees. Lastly, completing this DBA research in a niche research field in a small country was not an easy feat. However, the findings will help all SMEs understand how to deal with crisis periods in Bahrain towards their survival and sustainability. While developing as a scholar-practitioner, the ability to undertake novel research and help Bahrain, the researcher's place of residence 25 years, has been a great achievement. Also, the knowledge generated through the DBA research qualifies for participating in similar government tenders (Figure 32). Conducting novel research was not an easy task without encountering challenges. These are addressed through (8.7).

Figure 32: BCCI tender invitation



Tender Invitation **غرفة البحرين**
BAHRAIN CHAMBER

Bahrain Chamber invites specialized companies to submit their proposal for the following:

Tender Title	Tender Document Fee	Initial Bond	Tender Closing Date
Tender for preparing a study on evaluating the challenges faced by small and medium enterprises in terms of finance, insurance and technology	BD 50/- (Non-refundable)	BD 1,500/-	Thursday 9th September 2021 2:00 P.M.

Guidelines for the submission of bids:

- 1- Collect the tender documents (RFP) from the Finance Affairs Department in the 4th floor of Bahrain Chamber of Commerce & Industry headquarter in Sanabis (Bahrain Chamber Building), effective from 22 August 2021 until 9 September 2021 after paying the tender documents' fee in favor of Bahrain Chamber of Commerce & Industry.
- 2- Documents to be enclosed with the bids:
 - The initial bond as per the above table should be in the form of certified cheque, bank guarantee, or insurance policy valid for the duration specified in the tender document.
 - A copy of valid Commercial Registration Certificate for the current year, and copies of any other documents specified in the tender document.
 - A copy of valid BOCI membership.
- 3- All the documents submitted with the tender should be stamped with the company's official seal.
- 4- Offers must be submitted in sealed envelopes subscribed with the title of the tender and addressed to the CEO of Bahrain Chamber of Commerce & Industry. They should be deposited in the tender box available in the Finance Affairs Department (4th floor, East wing) before the closing date at an time.
- 5- This invitation form is part of the tender document.

For more details, kindly contact us on Tel: 17380034 or email: reem@bahrainchamber.bh

Source: GDN (2021, p. 12)

8.7. Challenges encountered when compiling this DBA research

As with any DBA research, there were several challenges when compiling this DBA research. As this DBA research showed, the initial presumptions led the research to a dead-end which later changed to identify that those unseen causes were more profound than initially visible.

Additionally, AR was a new research strategy for the action learning set. Some participants were sometimes reluctant to share information and saw AR as time-wasting, and in several instances, treated the researcher as a fault finder. Even though the SMEs' HoD's extended their best support to select participants who could add value to this DBA research, the HoDs' lack of knowledge of AR meant that they neglected to brief the participants in advance, resulting in several visits. Even as a preparatory measure, sharing the semi-structured questionnaire (Appendix B) in advance did not prepare participants for the discussions.

Chapters (5) and (6) used three frameworks to interpret findings, and presenting the findings through one framework was challenging. This applies to the data coding process as well. To interpret chapters (4), (5) and (6) findings into a readable format, employing a three-step coding process (Table 21) was laborious and time-consuming. Additionally, generating sensible data through numerous pages of action learning set and government office discussions was an added challenge. A significant challenge was a lack of sources from a GCC perspective on similar challenges, which compelled analysing the design and implementation from a global perspective. Additionally, this group of knowledgeable people (peers) was often challenging and it's doubtful if they had a genuine interest in Org. A. The following section (8.8) ends this chapter and the DBA research by discussing recommendations for future research.

8.8. Recommendations for future research

When this DBA journey began, except for two studies on SMEs with female entrepreneurs (Al-Ghazali, Yusoff, and Sadi 2013) and business support schemes (Alrabeei and Kasi,

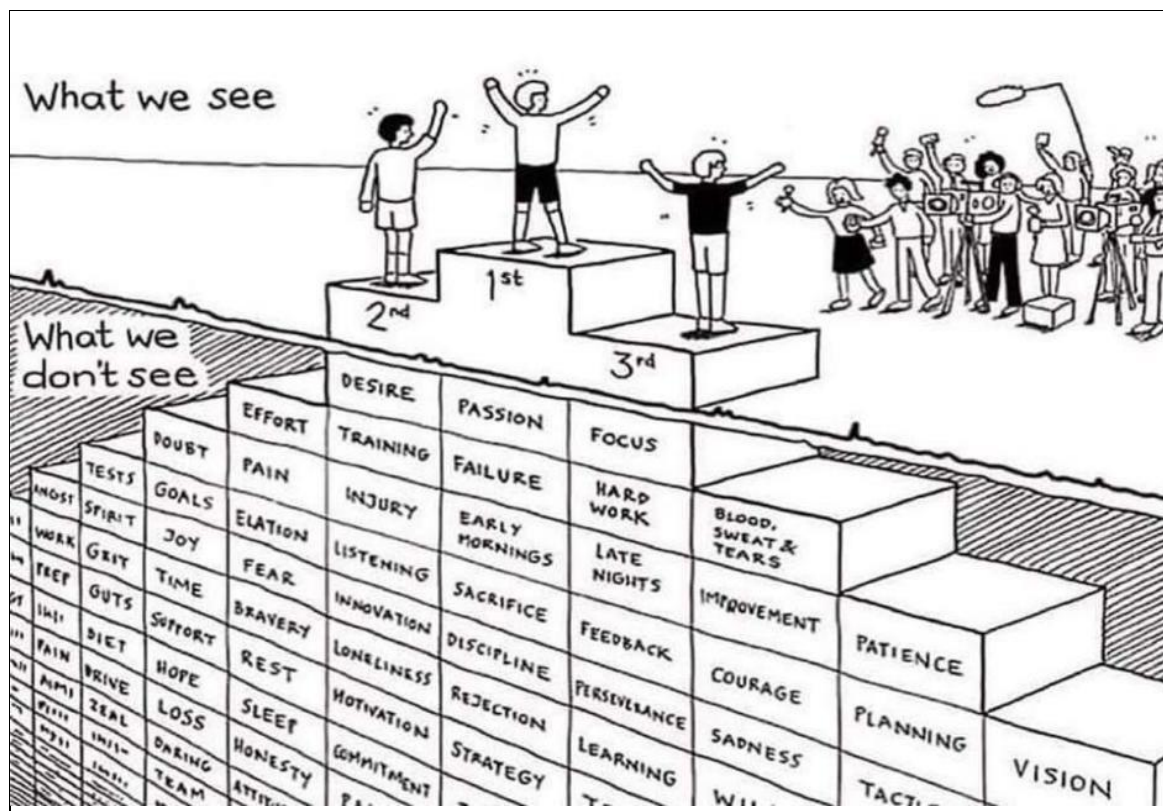
2014), there was a lack of past research relating to the research topic. However, this challenge allowed new research to be undertaken to address challenges that SMEs in Bahrain are experiencing in this economic crisis. This DBA research provided empirical evidence of SMEs in Bahrain and should help other researchers as a foundation to undertake similar research in the future.

This DBA research identified organisational and leadership challenges that prevented organisations from responding to an economic crisis. Findings from (8.3) showed the implications for the broader community that could benefit from this DBA research. The findings will help other practitioners to understand the consequences of presuming that only 'outside causes' lead to organisations' revenue or profit losses, preventing exploring possible 'inside causes' that could have been primarily responsible for an organisation's revenue losses.

Additionally, this DBA research showed that the drop in oil prices and the economic crisis impacted SMEs in Bahrain. The action learning set realised that SMEs must seriously explore and implement remedial steps to ensure a lesser impact from the drop in oil prices. In an economic crisis, this DBA research also showed how helpful Tamkeen is irrespective of ownership and size and how it adapts its support schemes to help the SME sector. Additionally, findings from this DBA research showed that weaker and vulnerable SMEs could go out of business, and the forward-looking and efficient SMEs would emerge stronger in the future. Perhaps the drop in oil prices and the economic crisis can weed out the less adaptable SMEs from the market. In this context, it is advisable to launch a follow-up survey when the oil prices resume to an acceptable level to measure the extent of the drop in the oil prices on the overall economy. This should provide an insight into the economic damage that the drop in oil prices had on SMEs. In addition, this should allow policymakers to prepare relevant policies to cope better with a similar crisis in the future.

Additionally, in future research, it is advisable to look at similar studies from a GCC perspective to realise how these SMEs have adapted to the economic crisis due to the drop in oil prices. Another aspect is, Bahrain is a developing country; it is also advisable to conduct comparison research from a south Asian country's angle.

Figure 33: What we see and do not see



Source: Grant (2018)

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Appendix A DBA ethics committee approval

31st May, 2017

Dear Aloma Jayasundera,

I am pleased to inform you that the DBA Ethics Committee has approved your application for ethical approval for your study. Details and conditions of the approval can be found below:

Committee Name: DBA Ethics Committee

Title of Study: The Effect of Fluctuations in Oil Prices upon the Sustainability of SMEs in the Kingdom of Bahrain

Student Investigator: Aloma Jayasundera

School/Institute: School of Management Approval Date: 29th of May 2017.

The application was APPROVED subject to the following conditions:

1. The researchers must obtain ethical approval from a local research ethics committee if this is an international study
2. University of Liverpool approval is subject to compliance with all relevant national legislative requirements if this is an international study.
3. All serious adverse events must be reported to the Sub-Committee within 24 hours of their occurrence, via the Research Integrity and Governance Officer (ethics@liv.ac.uk)
4. If it is proposed to make an amendment to the research, you should notify the Committee of the amendment.

This approval applies to the duration of the research. If it is proposed to extend the duration of the study as specified in the application form, the Committee should be notified.

Kind regards,

Dr Jim Hanly

DBA Ethics Committee University of Liverpool on-line Programmes

Appendix B The questionnaire

Date: 6th June 2017.

Hello Participant,

You are being invited to participate in my doctoral research on how the current plummeting oil price is affecting your business. Through my research, I intend to explore the strategies followed by SMEs in Bahrain and how they have adapted to the current oil price crisis to sustain their businesses. The drop-in oil prices started in summer 2014 and are predicted to continue for a further 3–4 years. Through this research project, I am planning to see how your organisation is dealing with the current turmoil, especially as your organisation falls under the SME category, and what measures your organisation is adopting as 'survival measures'.

Thank you in advance.

Aloma Jayasundera

Doctoral Candidate

The ice-breaker

Please explain the journey of your organisation so far, from inception to where you are today. Please list a few of the critical milestones in your organisation's journey so far.

Section A:

The following questions are relevant to the general nature of your organisation.

1. Name of your organisation:
2. Nature of your organisation (please tick as appropriate)
 - a) Private limited company.....
 - b) Public limited company.....
 - c) Partnership.....
 - d) Sole proprietor.....
 - e) Family-owned business.....
 - f) Other (please specify)
3. Nature/kind of organisation (please tick as appropriate)
 - a) Retail & trading.....
 - b) Manufacturing & export.....
 - c) Real estate & business
 - d) Social & personal services.....
 - e) Hotel/restaurant/catering services.....
 - f) Pearl diving / farming / fishery / pottery.....
 - g) Consultancy & legal.....
 - h) Salon & beauty industry.....
 - i) Medical, dental or dermatology.....
 - j) Other (please specify)

4. For how long has your company been in operation? (please tick as appropriate)

- a) Less than a year.....
- b) Between 1 and 5 years.....
- c) Between 6 and 10 years.....
- d) Between 11 and 15 years.....
- e) Over 15 years.....

5. How many people are employed by your company?

Section B:

The following questions are relevant to the effect of the current low oil price on your organisation.

1. Is the current oil price affecting your business? Yes/No

2. What areas does it have a direct effect on? You can select multiple responses.

- a) Lowering sales volumes and profits.....
- b) Not reaching sales targets.....
- c) Employee retention.....
- d) Unable to promote new products or new business sectors.....
- e) Not receiving supplier payments.....
- f) Other (please specify)

3. During this difficult period, have you considered any of the following? You can select multiple responses.

- a) Hiring new employees.....
- b) Training and coaching employees.....
- c) Increasing salaries and paying bonuses to staff.....
- d) Making redundancies and job cuts.....
- e) Other (please specify)

4. What is currently the most pressing problem your firm is facing?

- a) Finding customers.....
- b) Competition or cutthroat market strategies from competitors
- c) Access to finance
- d) Costs of production or labour.....
- e) Availability of skilled staff or experienced managers.....
- f) State regulations.....
- g) Other

5. During the past 12 months, have you announced any of the following? You can select multiple responses.
- a) Introducing a new or considerably improved service or product to the market.....
 - b) Introducing a new or considerably improved production method or process
 - c) Introducing a new type of management.....

Section C:

The following questions relate to the revenue generation of your company, addressing if the following aspects have increased, decreased or remained unchanged since the oil crisis commenced.

1. Please state a percentage +/- against each category.
- a) Turnover.....
 - b) Labour costs (including social contributions)
 - c) Other costs (energy, materials, etc.)
 - d) Profit [= NET INCOME AFTER TAXES]
 - e) Mark-up [= SELLING PRICE MINUS PRODUCTION COST PER UNIT]
2. Would you say that the amount of debt compared to the assets of your company has increased, decreased or remain unchanged since the oil crisis commenced?
- a) Increased.....
 - b) Remained unchanged.....
 - c) Decreased.....
 - d) Not applicable, no debt.....

Section D:

The following questions relate to the financing issues of your organisation: the effort of securing credit and the options your company is considering for the future.

1. Concerning the funding structure of your company, could you please specify whether you have used internal or external funding during the past thirty-six months? You can select multiple responses.
- a) Internal/personal funds or savings.....
 - b) Support from public sources
 - c) Bank loans or overdrafts
 - d) Borrowings from family and friends.....
 - e) Leases or hire purchases.....
 - f) Other.....

2. Relating to external financing, have your needs remained unchanged, increased or decreased over the past two years?
- a) Increased.....
 - b) Remained unchanged.....
 - c) Decreased.....
 - d) Not applicable.....
3. Please state whether you have applied for any financial assistance from any funding institute (i.e., Tamkeen or a local bank) during the past two years.
- a) Applied.....
 - b) Have not applied because of possible rejection.....
 - c) Have not applied because of sufficient internal funds.....
 - d) Have not applied for other reasons.....
4. What was it?
- a) Bank loan (new or renewal)
 - b) Trade credit.....
 - c) Overdraft facilities.....
 - d) Other external financing.....
 - e) Not applicable.....
5. Did you manage to receive the full financing you requested?
- a) Applied and received the full funding.....
 - b) Applied but only got a portion of the funding.....
 - c) Applied but declined because the cost was too high.....
 - d) Applied but was not granted.....
 - e) Not applicable.....
6. Would you say that the funding has changed, made no change to or deteriorated your organisation?
- a) Improved.....
 - b) No change.....
 - c) Deteriorated.....
 - d) Not applicable.....

7. What has improved after receiving funding? You can select multiple responses.
- a) General economic outlook.....
 - b) Access to public financial support, including guarantees.....
 - c) Sales and profitability or business plan.....
 - d) Organisation's individual capital.....
 - e) Organisation's credit history.....
 - f) The enthusiasm of banks to provide grants.....
 - g) The readiness of business associates to provide trade credit.....
 - h) Not applicable.....
8. What was the scope of the last financial assistance that your firm acquired in the last two years?
- a) We have not taken any financial assistance.....
 - b) Smaller than BD 25,000.....
 - c) BD 25 000–100 000.....
 - d) BD 100 000–1 million.....
 - e) Over BD 1 million.....
9. Who provided the last loan to your organisation?
- a) Bank (please specify the bank?)
 - b) Private individual – family or friend.....
 - c) Other source (e.g. microfinance institution or government-related source)
 - d) Tamkeen.....
 - e) Not applicable.....
10. What was your reason for taking this loan?
- a) Working capital.....
 - b) Land/buildings or equipment/vehicles.....
 - c) Research and development or intellectual property.....
 - d) Promotion.....
 - e) Staff training.....
 - f) Buying another business.....
 - g) Other.....
 - h) Not applicable.....

Section E:

If your answer was 'Tamkeen' or 'bank' for the above questions, please answer these questions related to the Tamkeen Enterprise Support Scheme.

1. Are you aware of the financial support and bail-out grants extended by the Tamkeen Enterprise Support Scheme? Yes/No
2. Has your company ever applied for credit from Tamkeen or BDB? You can select multiple responses.
 - a) Do not like bank loans.....
 - b) Interest rates too high.....
 - c) No collateral to pledge.....
 - d) Need for too many complex and lengthy documents.....
 - e) Others (specify).....
3. If your answer was a, b, c or d to the above question, how do you rate your relationship with Tamkeen/BDB?
 - a) Excellent.....
 - b) Good.....
 - c) Average.....
 - d) Poor.....
 - e) No comment.....
4. Have you ever been refused or denied financial support from Tamkeen or BDB? Yes/No
5. What was the main reason your bank refused to offer you loan? You can select multiple responses.
 - a) Default on previous loan.....
 - b) No security to pledge.....
 - c) Too small equity base.....
 - d) Lack of experienced management.....
 - e) Not applicable.....
6. What was the purpose of the loan? You can select multiple responses.
 - a) Start-up capital.....
 - b) Working capital.....
 - c) Expansion of business.....
 - d) Other (specify).....
 - e) Not applicable.....

7. What supporting documents did the financial institute request from you? You can select multiple responses.
- a) Cash flow statement.....
 - b) Total assets.....
 - c) Audited financial statement (account).....
 - d) Business plan.....
 - e) Other (specify).....
 - f) Not applicable.....
8. What was the maturity period of the loan?
- a) Up to 1 year.....
 - b) Up to 2 years.....
 - c) Up to 3 years.....
 - d) Other (specify).....
 - e) Not applicable.....
9. With the loan, did you notice that it resulted in...
- a) Substantial growth – over 20% per year in terms of turnover.....
 - b) Moderate growth – below 20% per year in terms of turnover.....
 - c) No growth
 - d) Decreased growth
10. Do you think the current situation will improve, deteriorate or remain unchanged over the next two years?
- a) Will recover.....
 - b) Will remain unaffected.....
 - c) Will worsen.....
 - d) No idea.....
11. What do you see as the main obstacles for your organisation to grow in the current market conditions? You can select multiple responses.
- a) Company is too small.....
 - b) Listing is too exclusive.....
 - c) Reporting necessities are too weighty.....
 - d) Fractional loss of control over time.....
 - e) Predicted market conditions are hostile.....

Section F:

This section relates to the external business activities that your organisation has undertaken towards keeping a steady income flow.

1. What types of activities has your organisation performed to supplement its revenue? You can select multiple responses.
 - a) Engaging in other business activities.....
 - b) Expanding into new markets.....
 - c) Expanding service portfolio.....
 - d) Partnering with other organisations or performing business operations in conjunction with partners.....
 - e) Other (specify).....

2. How do you view the Tamkeen and BDB support programmes extended to SMEs in Bahrain?
 - a) Excellent
 - b) Very good
 - c) Average to medium
 - d) Medium
 - e) Low
 - f) Poor
 - g) No comment

Appendix C Action proposal letter to Org. A

20th February 2018

The Chief Executive Officer
Sysprove Consulting W.L.L.
P O Box 26494, Adliya, Kingdom of Bahrain

Dear Sir,

The effect of fluctuations in oil prices upon the sustainability of SMEs in the Kingdom of Bahrain

It is my pleasure to inform you that meetings with the SMEs who volunteered to participate in my Doctoral Research are now complete. During these meetings, the SMEs were informed that I wish to bring some changes towards the development of the SMEs who have been most vulnerable during the current oil crisis. The meeting minutes and our lengthy discussions suggest that your organisation has experienced the highest sales loss and that this is hampering your organisation's survival.

As discussed, as a goodwill gesture for the support extended during the meetings, I wish to propose and implement a number of strategies towards the betterment of your organisation. The suggestions presented are not challenging to implement. A considerable portion of the programmes I have suggested is sponsored through various Tamkeen scale-up and mature programmes.

The progress of the proposed actions will be notified promptly. If you agree with the proposed changes, please acknowledge them.

Best regards!

Aloma Jayasundera/Doctoral Student/University of Liverpool

Appendix D Action acceptance letter from Org. A



25th February 2018

Aloma Jayasundera/Doctoral Student/University of Liverpool
Student No: H00037181

The effect of fluctuations in oil prices upon the sustainability of SMEs in the Kingdom of Bahrain

Thank you for taking the time to discuss your proposed Action Plans. As agreed during several meetings, and having gone through your suggested proposals, we have decided to seek your assistance in implementing them in our organisation. None of the actions proposed by you as a Doctoral student are challenging to execute.

As an expatriate businessman in Bahrain, we must admit that we were not aware that we were privileged to benefit from the Tamkeen Wage Support scheme if we are to hire Bahraini nationals. We appreciate you sharing this information with us. Also, we were not aware of being able to benefit from the Marketing and Branding funding scheme.

As agreed, two senior consultants are assigned to support you twice a week. This will take place on Tuesdays and Thursdays, beginning 27th February 2018, for the next three to six months. As we progress, we can discuss the implementation of the milestones.

Let me take this opportunity to wish you the very best and thank you once again for your support.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. Jayasundera".

Ravi Jayasundera
Chief Executive Officer
Sysprove Consulting W.L.L.

Appendix E Action implementation stages of Org. A

Appendix E.1 Forming business partnerships

Fluxicon, The Netherlands



Agreement for Cooperation

Fluxicon's business:

- Primary: technology supplier for process mining software
- Secondary: professional services related to support of software, training, and delivery of projects based on our software.

Sysprove Consulting's business:

- Professional services related business process management in Bahrain

Basis for agreement:

- Sysprove Consulting wants to offer services using Disco, the Process Mining tool by Fluxicon, and needs to be able to give demos with large data sets to acquire customers.
- Fluxicon is interested in combining the actual license agreement with commercial activities such as joint case studies, joint conference presentations, etc.
- Goal: Help Sysprove Consulting to become a recognized provider for process mining services and strengthen the position of Fluxicon in the market

Standard agreement:

- Fluxicon provides Sysprove Consulting with Disco licenses for internal training and customer demos, given that:
 - These licenses are only used for demos (no results are left with the customer)
 - After each demo, Sysprove Consulting will de-brief the demo with the following six points to help Fluxicon improve their software and positioning:
 1. Job title/industry
 2. Critical business issue (CBI)
 3. Reasons for CBI, problems impacting CBI
 4. Specific capabilities sought
 5. Delta – estimated impact of Disco on customer situation
 6. Timeframe – date/event driving decision
 - After each completed customer project, Sysprove Consulting will de-brief the project with Fluxicon. One of the goals is to learn where the software needs improvement. Another goal is to check and discuss whether the performed project could be suitable for a case study, jointly advertised on both companies' websites.
- If the process mining service activities by Sysprove Consulting should result in the sale of a Disco license to one of Sysprove Consulting's customers (within one year from the start of the project), then Fluxicon is prepared to pay 20% of the initial licensing revenue (excl. maintenance fees) to Sysprove Consulting as a commission, whereas:
 - Fluxicon sends Sysprove Consulting a copy of the invoice sent to the customer.
 - Fluxicon pays Sysprove Consulting the commission within five business days after receiving the payment.

Timeframe and termination:

- Timeframe: One year starting from 1st April (until end of March 2019)
- After six months, a joint review of the agreement is planned
- Either party can cancel at any time upon 30 days prior written notice

Anne Rozinat
Fluxicon
Date: 28-03-2018

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Anne Rozinat".

Ravi Jayasundera
Sysprove Consulting
Date: 29-03-2018

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ravi Jayasundera".

251676
251678
.com

Memorandum of Understanding & Non Disclosure Agreement (NDA)

BETWEEN

- (1) **Mundhir Al Barwani** (hereafter identified as MAB), an individual residing within the Sultanate of Oman whose address is PO Box 562, 116 Mina Al Fahal, Sultanate of Oman and
- (2) **Sysprove Consulting WLL**(hereafter identified as Sysprove), a company incorporated and registered under the laws of Kingdom of Bahrain whose address is at Office 32, Building 1144, Road 3020, Block 330, Kingdom of Bahrain.


WHEREAS

- (1) **MAB** and Sysprove may be individually or collectively referred to herein as the "Party" or "Parties".
- (2) **MAB** will be promoting the services of Sysprove to prospective clients.
- (3) **MAB** will be assisting Sysprove to execute consultancy projects to various clients.
- (4) **MAB** shall ensure that on receiving the information (in such capacity a "Receiving Party") maintains the confidentiality of all information and materials disclosed ("Confidential Items") at all times or as hereinafter provided by Sysprove, the party submitting the information (in such capacity a "Submitting Party").

1. Business Process Improvement
2. Process Documentation
3. Process Audit
4. Compile Organisational Policies, Procedures and Work Instructions
5. Defining Metrics & KPIs
6. Assisting organisations prepare and achieve ISO 9001certification

This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the Sultanate of Oman, and the courts of the Sultanate of Oman shall have exclusive jurisdiction.

Signed for and on behalf of


Signature_____

Name: Mundhir Al Barwani

Signed for and on behalf of
Sysprove Consulting WLL


Signature:_____

Name: Ravi Jayasundera

Title: CEO



05040-FO6-Press Release-Form
Owner: BD Manager
Classification: Public | ACL: Business Development

Approver: BD Supervisor
Version: 1.0
Page 1 of 1



PECB
When Recognition Matters

+1-844-426-7322

E: customer@pecb.com, W: www.pecb.com

PRESS RELEASE

PECB signs a partnership agreement with Sysprove Consulting WLL

(May 30, 2018) – The Professional Evaluation and Certification Board (PECB) a global leading provider for comprehensive examination and certification services, has today announced a partnership agreement with Sysprove Consulting, a management consulting and training provider for professional service firms and individuals. With this partnership agreement PECB strengthens its partner's network, while improving the distribution and availability of PECB training courses and professional certification offerings, and Sysprove Consulting, will strengthen their own ability to provide PECB training courses like ISO 9001, ISO 27001, ISO 14001, ISO 37001 an all other courses listed on PECB website.

"Our partnership with Sysprove Consulting will continue to enhance PECB partnership program, with a focus on expanding the options available to delivering professional training course services," said Eric Lachapelle, chief executive officer of PECB. "The PECB partnership policy has always been about bringing the best solutions to the market to help our customers. We believe that Sysprove Consulting services are unique in the market place of Bahrain and that customers with management strategies will welcome its vast features of expansive management learning solutions. The PECB partner program will enable Sysprove Consulting, to deliver training courses, while offering updated training materials and professional certifications. In addition, our professional team and resources will be a great asset of supporting this business partnership," concluded Lachapelle.

PARTNER'S PART, Ravi Jayasundera, CEO, Sysprove Consulting WLL]

As a leading business process and technology consultancy in Bahrain and the wider Middle East region we believe our partnership with PECB will further enhance the services we provide to our clients. The training offerings from PECB will complement the training and capacity building which Sysprove provide as a core component of each consulting assignment. With the partnership with PECB we hope to further expand our services and provide a wider selection of training courses and capacity building to our clients.

About PECB

PECB is a certification body for persons, management systems, and products on a wide range of international standards. As a global provider of training, examination, audit, and certification services, PECB offers its expertise on multiple fields, including but not limited to Information Security, IT, Business Continuity, Service Management, Quality Management Systems, Risk & Management, Health, Safety, and Environment.

We help professionals and organizations to show commitment and competence with internationally recognized standards by providing this assurance through the education, evaluation and certification against rigorous, internationally recognized competence requirements. Our mission is to provide our clients comprehensive services that inspire trust, continual improvement, demonstrate recognition, and benefit society as a whole. For further information regarding PECB principal objectives and activities, visit www.pecb.com.



Memorandum of Understanding & Non Disclosure Agreement (NDA)

THIS AGREEMENT (the "Agreement") is made on the 15th July 2018

BETWEEN

- (1) **Arabian Al Kanar Co Ltd.** (hereafter identified as AAK), a company incorporated and registered under the laws of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia whose address is PO Box 30275, Al Khobar, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and
- (2) **Sysprove Consulting WLL** (hereafter identified as Sysprove), a company incorporated and registered under the laws of Kingdom of Bahrain whose address is at Office 32, Building 1144, Road 3020, Block 330, Kingdom of Bahrain.

1 PROMOTION OF SYSPROVE SERVICES

AAK will promote the services of Sysprove within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Sysprove will provide AAK the necessary information to enable the promotion.

2 AMENDMENT

This Agreement may not be amended except in writing and signed by both Parties.

3 NON-SOLICITATION

During the term of this Agreement and for a period of twelve (12) months thereafter, the Parties agree not to hire, recruit, solicit or otherwise employ any employee of either party.

4 SUCCESSORS

The rights and obligations of the Parties under this Agreement shall continue for the benefit of, and shall be binding on their respective successor's and permitted assigns.

5 ASSIGNMENT

The Parties shall not assign or transfer any of its rights or obligations under this Agreement without the prior written consent of the other party, which may be withheld for any reason.

6 DISPUTE RESOLUTION

The Parties agree that should any dispute under this Agreement arise among them, every effort shall be made by the appropriate management of the respective Party to resolve such dispute in good faith.

7 GOVERNING LAW/JURISDICTION

This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the Kingdom of Bahrain, and the courts of the Kingdom of Bahrain have exclusive jurisdiction.

In witness whereof this Agreement is executed this 15th July 2018

A blue ink signature of Hassan Asiree, consisting of a stylized 'H' and 'A'.

Hassan Asiree
Arabian Al Kanar Co Ltd
Date: 15-07-2018

A blue ink signature of Ravi Jayasundera, featuring a cursive 'R' and 'J'.

Ravi Jayasundera
Sysprove Consulting
Date: 15-07-2018

Sysprove Consulting W.L.L.
P.O. Box 26494, Kingdom of Bahrain.
CR No: 83813

Tel: +973 17 251676
Fax: +973 17 251678
www.sysprove.com

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Partner: Sysprove Consulting WLL
Address: Office 32, Building 1144, Road 3020, Block 330, Kingdom of Bahrain
Telephone: +973 17251676
Registered: CR No 83813 issued by the Ministry of Commerce in the Kingdom of Bahrain
VAT Number: N/A
Authorised Representative: Ravi Jayasundera
Position: CEO

(the Partner)

This Agreement is made on the date of acceptance by you, by and between ThreatMark s.r.o. (Ltd.), registered in the Czech Republic under ID 04222091 in the Business Register of the country court of Brno, Czech Republic, filed under section C, entry no. 88825, VAT number: CZ04222091, address: Hlinky 505/118, Pisárky, 603 00 Brno, Czech Republic (the COMPANY), and the Partner.

(the Partner and the COMPANY further as the "Parties")

Background

COMPANY owns or has the exclusive rights to license and distribute threat detection and anti-fraud solution software and adjacent procedures hereinafter referred as "COMPANY SW". The Partner wishes to become a non-exclusive Partner for COMPANY SW distribution within the Territory, defined below.

By returning the signed agreement in a printed format, the Partner acknowledges and confirms that the Partner has reviewed this Agreement and all other terms, conditions and policies of COMPANY displayed and unambiguously and with full awareness consents to the terms of this Agreement which will be binding upon the Partner.

 ThreatMark s.r.o.

Hlinky 505/118 603 00 Brno | Czech Republic

ICR 04222091 ICR: CZ04222091

www.threatmark.com

THIS AGREEMENT HAS BEEN AGREED TO BY  COMPANY

PRINT NAME: MICHAEL TREŠNER
DATE: 23.7.2018




THIS AGREEMENT HAS BEEN AGREED TO BY _____, PARTNER

PRINT NAME: RAVI JAYASUNDERA
DATE: 9TH JULY 2018

Appendix E.2 Improving networking behaviour

CEO appointed to the BCCI technology committee



غرفة تجارة وصناعة البحرين
BAHRAIN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

Technology Committee Mins. Of Meeting no. (1)			
Day/Date	Sunday 15 th July 2018	Meeting No.	1/2018
Time	14:00- 15:30		
Location	Committee's Meeting room		
Name of the Committee Executive	Shaikha A.Aziz		

Attendees	Apologized members	Absent members
1. Dr. Osama Taqi Albaharna 2. Ahmed Atiyayalla Alhujairi 3. Abdulla Mohamed Yusuf Ishaq 4. Khalifa Abdulla Al Mannai 5. S. M. Hussaini 6. Rashed Abdulla Al Snan 7. Ravi Jayasundera 8. Alharith Abdulrahman Alatawi		1.Tareq Qasim Fakhroo

Meeting Agenda
1. Appointing the Vice Chairman.
2. Schedule meetings for the committee for a year.
3. Discussing the plan main topics
4. Other matters raised by members


Meeting Discussions

The committee chairman welcomed everybody and introduced himself, he asked each member to introduce himself and give a brief about his business.

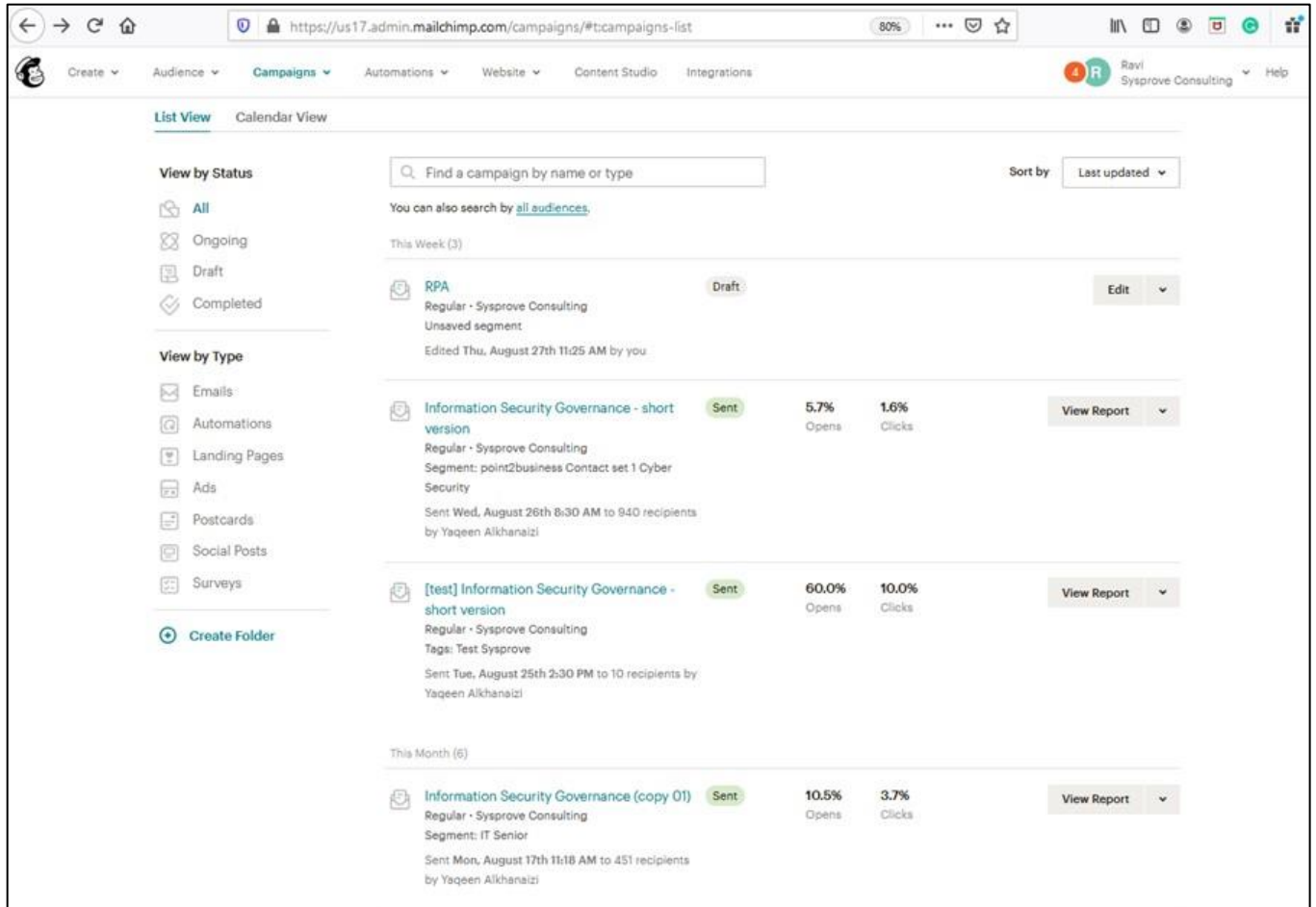
No	Subject	Discussion
1.	Appointing the Vice Chairman	All agreed to appoint Mr. Ahmed AlHujairi
2.	Schedule meetings for the committee for a year	The chairman displayed a rough draft of the upcoming meetings. Selected dates are 15 th , and 22 nd of July, 3 rd September, 11 th October, 19 th November, & 10 th December. 29 th July remains as optional if needed.
3.	Discussing the plan main topics	➤ The Committee reviewed its obligations and requirements for work Plan. ➤ It was agreed all actions will focus on three main requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Activities related to internal BCCI Digital Transformation

CEO joined elite social clubs



	Statement					
	Capital Club Bahrain Level-23, Harbour Towers East, P.O. Box 60433 Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain Ph: +973 17 100100 Fax: +973 17 100101 www.capitalclubbahrain.com VAT A/C NO.200011392400002					
Mr. Ravi Jayasundera Sysprove Consulting W.L.L. Gulf Medical Lab, ZINJ Office 32, bldg 1144 Rd 3020, Block 330 PO Box 26494, Manama Kingdom of Bahrain	<table border="1"><tr><td>J0051</td><td>31 Mar 19</td></tr><tr><td>MEMBER</td><td>DATE</td></tr></table>		J0051	31 Mar 19	MEMBER	DATE
	J0051	31 Mar 19				
MEMBER	DATE					
	AMOUNT DUE _____					

Obtained mail-chimp subscription



The screenshot displays the Mailchimp 'Campaigns' page. The left sidebar contains navigation options: 'Create', 'Audience', 'Campaigns' (selected), 'Automations', 'Website', 'Content Studio', and 'Integrations'. Below these are filters for 'View by Status' (All, Ongoing, Draft, Completed) and 'View by Type' (Emails, Automations, Landing Pages, Ads, Postcards, Social Posts, Surveys). A 'Create Folder' button is at the bottom of the sidebar.

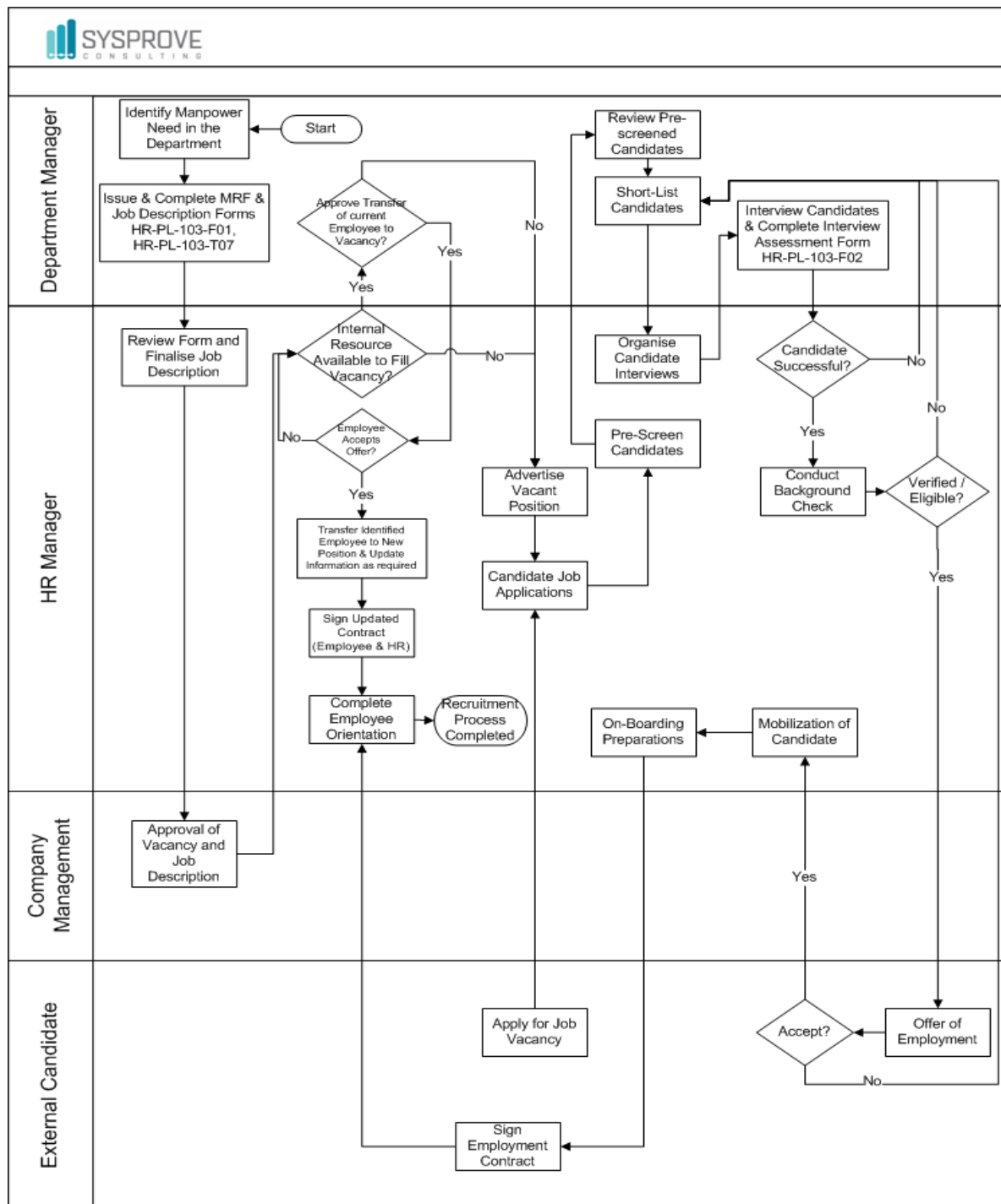
The main content area has a search bar 'Find a campaign by name or type' and a 'Sort by' dropdown set to 'Last updated'. Below the search bar, it says 'You can also search by [all audiences](#)'.

The campaigns are listed in two sections: 'This Week (3)' and 'This Month (6)'. Each campaign entry includes a status icon (Draft or Sent), the campaign name, the audience, the segment, the send date and time, and the sender. Performance metrics for 'Opens' and 'Clicks' are shown for sent campaigns, along with a 'View Report' button.

Section	Campaign Name	Status	Audience	Segment	Sent Date/Time	Sender	Opens	Clicks
This Week (3)	RPA	Draft	Regular - Sysprove Consulting	Unsaved segment	Edited Thu, August 27th 11:25 AM	by you		
	Information Security Governance - short version	Sent	Regular - Sysprove Consulting	Segment: point2business Contact set 1 Cyber Security	Sent Wed, August 26th 8:30 AM to 940 recipients	by Yaqeen Alkhanazi	5.7%	1.6%
	[test] Information Security Governance - short version	Sent	Regular - Sysprove Consulting	Tag: Test Sysprove	Sent Tue, August 25th 2:30 PM to 10 recipients	by Yaqeen Alkhanazi	60.0%	10.0%
This Month (6)	Information Security Governance (copy 01)	Sent	Regular - Sysprove Consulting	Segment: IT Senior	Sent Mon, August 17th 11:18 AM to 451 recipients	by Yaqeen Alkhanazi	10.5%	3.7%

Appendix F Attracting the right talent

Appendix F.1 Formulated a R&S framework




EMPLOYEE DETAILS			
Employee Name			Arrival Date
Position		Project / Dept	
Nationality		Point Of Origin	

SN.	CHECKLIST ITEMS	YES	NO	N/A
A	PRE ARRIVAL			
A1	EMPLOYMENT OFFER CONFIRMATION	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A2	START DATE CONFIRMATION	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A3	GOVERNMENT RELATIONS - ISSUE WORK VISA	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A4	GOVERNMENT RELATIONS - TRANSFER SPONSORSHIP	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A5	TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS / ISSUE FLIGHT TICKET	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A6	AIRPORT PICK-UP	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B	EMPLOYEE FIRST DAT			
B1	EMPLOYEE PROVIDES DOCUMENTS FOR EMPLOYEE FILE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B2	EMPLOYEE SIGNS EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B3	EMPLOYEE SIGNS CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B4	COMPLETE EMPLOYEE INFORMATION FORM & SIGN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B5	ASSIGN EMPLOYEE ID NUMBER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B6	ASSIGN EMPLOYEE OFFICE SEAT LOCATION	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B7	IT ARRANGEMENTS: PHONE LINE & UPDATE EMPLOYEE CONTACT LIST	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B8	IT ARRANGEMENTS: EMAIL & UPDATE EMAIL DISTRIBUTION LISTS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B9	IT ARRANGEMENTS: PRINTER ACCESS FROM COMPUTER & EMAIL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B10	IT ARRANGEMENTS: OFFICE ACCESS - FRONT DOOR FINGERPRINT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B11	HANDOVER OF COMPANY PROPERTY & SIGN FORM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B12	ORIENTATION : PRESENTATION TO COLLEAGUES	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B13	ORIENTATION : TOUR OF PREMISES AND HEALTH & SAFETY INSTRUCTIONS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B14	ORIENTATION : INFORMATION ON COMPANY POLICIES & THEIR LOCATION	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B15	ORIENTATION : REVIEW CODE OF CONDUCT & SIGN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C	WITHIN 1ST MONTH OF EMPLOYMENT			
C1	GOVERNMENT RELATIONS - ISSUE EMPLOYEE NATIONAL ID CARD (CPR)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C2	GOVERNMENT RELATIONS - ISSUE EMPLOYEE RESIDENCY PERMIT IN PASSPORT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C3	ISSUE MEDICAL INSURANCE FOR EMPLOYEE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C4	ISSUE EMPLOYEE BUSINESS CARD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C5	GOVERNMENT RELATIONS - FAMILY NATIONAL ID CARDS (CPR)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C6	GOVERNMENT RELATIONS - FAMILY RESIDENCY PERMIT IN PASSPORT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

FOR HR USE ONLY		
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: flex-end;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> Ahmed S. Asim Name </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> Signature </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> Date 278 </div> </div>		
<i>Note: All applicable checklist items should be available in employee folder.</i>		

Appendix F.2 Introduced policies and procedures manuals

	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"><tr><td style="width: 50%;">Version</td><td style="width: 50%;">0.2</td></tr><tr><td>Effective Date</td><td>1st January 2018</td></tr></table>	Version	0.2	Effective Date	1 st January 2018
Version	0.2				
Effective Date	1 st January 2018				

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Document No.: HR-PL-100

Reviewed by: Ahmed S. Asim

Signature: _____

Designation: HR Manager

Date: _____

Approved by: Sam Kawa

Signature: _____

Designation: CEO

Date: _____

Confidentiality Level:	Confidential	Next Review Date:	XXXXXX
-------------------------------	--------------	--------------------------	--------

Appendix F.3 Obtained ISO qualifications

Lead auditor training course ISO22301:2012





Certificate of Achievement

is being awarded to

Shereen Mahmood Redha

for

**Business Continuity Management System
Auditor / Lead Auditor Training Course (A17755)
Based on ISO 22301:2012**



ID: 118664 / 02962

Held at
Elite Resort & Spa, Kingdom of Bahrain
Saturday, July 14, 2018 to Wednesday, July 18, 2018

By passing continuous assessment and written examination

This Course is certified by (CQI and IRCA). This Course meets the formal training requirements for individuals seeking certification under (CQI and IRCA) **BCMS** Auditor Certification Scheme and for this purpose this certificate is valid for 5 years from the date of completion



Issued By:
Resource Inspections Canada Incorporated
41 Bevan Crescent, Ajax, On, Canada, L1T4P4
www.riconline.com





Certificate of Achievement

is being awarded to

Mohammed Redha Shafeei

for

**Business Continuity Management System
Auditor / Lead Auditor Training Course (A17755)
Based on ISO 22301:2012**



ID: 118860 / 02957

Held at
Elite Resort & Spa, Kingdom of Bahrain
Saturday, July 14, 2018 to Wednesday, July 18, 2018

By passing continuous assessment and written examination

This Course is certified by (CQI and IRCA). This Course meets the formal training requirements for Individuals seeking certification under (CQI and IRCA) **BCMS** Auditor Certification Scheme and for this purpose this certificate is valid for 5 years from the date of completion




Issued By:
Resource Inspections Canada Incorporated
41 Bevan Crescent, Ajax, Ont. Canada, L1T4P4
www.riconline.com



Lead auditor training course ISO27001:2013



Appendix F.4 Introduced an employee performance appraisal policy

	Version	0.1
	Effective Date	31 st Jan 2018

EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL POLICY

Document No.: HR-PL-104

Reviewed by: Ahmed S. Asim	Designation: HR Manager
Signature: _____	Date: _____
Approved by: Sam Kawa	Designation: CEO
Signature: _____	Date: _____

Confidentiality Level:	Confidential	Next Review Date:	XXXXX
------------------------	--------------	-------------------	-------

Appendix G Registered with government offices

Appendix G.1 Obtained the BCCI membership


For : Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism			
CR #	Branch #	Due Date	Amount
83813	1	09/01/2021	80 BHD
83813		09/12/2020	100 BHD

Amount - المبلغ		Description - التفاصيل
BHD	Fils	
30	0	Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism (BCCI Fee)
50	0	Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism
100	0	Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism (Activity fee)
180.00 BHD		Total - المجموع

For details of activity fee, please visit www.sijilat.bh (Menu: Commercial Registration -> My CR -> CR Activities & Fees)
للحصول على تفاصيل رسوم الأنشطة، الرجاء زيارة www.sijilat.bh (القائمة: السجل التجاري -> السجلات الخاصة بي -> أنشطة ورسوم السجل)

Payment Type :	Online	طريقة الدفع
Cashier :	Online	أمين الصندوق

Appendix G.2 Registered as a potential tenderer with Bahrain Tender Board

Receipt Details :	
	
Ministry :	Tamkeen
Address Title :	Tamkeen Address
Address Line 1 :	P.O. Box 18131
Address Line 2 :	--
P.O. Box :	0
City :	Manama
Country :	Bahrain
Zip :	--
Telephone :	17383333
Fax :	17382704
Email :	amarzoog@tamkeen.bh
Supplier :	SysProve Technologies W.L.L.
Address Title :	
Address Line 1 :	
Address Line 2 :	--
P.O. Box :	0
City :	--
Country :	
Zip :	--
Telephone :	
Fax :	
Email :	
Tender No. :	LF-170
PA Ref No. :	LF-170
Title :	Tamkeen Investment Department Policies and Procedures
Receipt Number :	831306579462
Authorization Value :	BHD 15
Authorization Code :	T07474
Merchant Transaction No :	12379_19970_204048_081118101712
Payment Transaction No :	2090002348
Transaction Date :	08-Nov-2018 22:19
Card Type :	Master Card

Appendix H Registered with Tamkeen

Appendix H.1 Business development programme

The screenshot shows the 'Business Development' portal. The header is blue with the Tamkeen logo on the left and navigation links 'VENDORS', 'PROGRAMS', 'HELP', 'RAVINDRA', and 'عربي' on the right. Below the header, there are two buttons: 'Dashboard' and 'Services Page'. A main section titled 'View My Application [ES/83813-1/03883] SYSPROVE CONSULTING W.L.L.' is visible. At the bottom, there are three input fields labeled 'Application Status', 'Grant Approved', and 'Account Manager'.

Appendix H.2 Training and wage support programme

The screenshot shows the 'Employees Development' portal. The header is green with the Tamkeen logo on the left and navigation links 'VENDORS', 'PROGRAMS', 'HELP', 'RAVINDRA', and 'عربي' on the right. Below the header, there are two buttons: 'Dashboard' and 'Services Page'. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column is titled 'Enterprise Application Summary' and contains a table with the following data:

CR/License Number	Enterprise Name	Application Reference
83813-1	SysProve Consulting co w.l.l	TWS/83813-1/01817

The right column is titled 'Account Manager' and contains contact information for 'Tamkeen Support' with an email icon and the number '17383333'. At the bottom of the page, there is a section titled 'Manage Wage Subsidy Support Requests'.

Appendix H.3 Coaching and mentoring programme

LinkedIn **تمكين Tamkeen**

Tamkeen cordially invites you to attend

Finding the Right Team with LinkedIn



by: **Wael Hassan**
Senior Key account
MENA Director - LinkedIn

 **Monday, 7 / 5 / 2018**

 from **5:30 PM** to **8:00 PM**

 **Al Majlis BCCI**

 **Limited Seats**

To register, please [click here](#)

Get a chance to participate in the largest tech gathering in Asia - the RISE 2018 in Hong Kong 9-11 July 2018.

[Apply Now to get Tamkeen's support](#)

Apply for a chance to receive support to attend the **RISE 2018**

Hong Kong 9-11 July, 2018


RISE

Get the opportunity to attend the largest tech gathering in Asia. All tech-Enabled startups in Bahrain are invited to apply and get Tamkeen's support that covers:

- 100% of the participation cost is supported by Tamkeen for 10 startups
- Up to 80% of accommodation and flight fees covered by Tamkeen (up to a cap)
- 1-1.5 meter square area for each participant
- 3 conference passes for 3 days
- Access to match making platform for one-on-one meetings with top tech investors, CEO's and decision makers
- Pitching opportunities to investors, attendees and corporates

Appendix I Amendments to the business plan


Appendix I.1 Participated in major IT exhibitions




Order Form

Please sign the following two pages and return them by fax to IDC Saudi Arabia, Attn. Hamza Naqshbandi
Fax: +966 11 434 8200

Partnership	Value-ad	USD	SAR
Lunch partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logo and Company profile on regional IDC Website. • Branding on all media covering the event (Web, Press, Portals, Newspaper Adverts). • Lunch Partner gets co-branding on lunch tables • Conference Passes – 3. • Exhibit space(1.22x2) Sq Mts in the FOYER AREA • Invitation to partner VIP CIO- 4. • List of Summit Attendees, report, post event – sales tool . 	8,500	31,883
	VAT	425	1,594

Total Amount	USD 8,925 incl of VAT SAR 33,477 incl of VAT
Company	

Signature and Legal Stamp of Ordering Company



Terms and Conditions

IDC TERMS AND PRICING ARE CONFIDENTIAL AND MAY NOT BE REDISTRIBUTED.

Participated in IDC CIO summit 2018 exhibition in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia



Participated in IDC CIO summit 2019 exhibition in Saudi Arabia



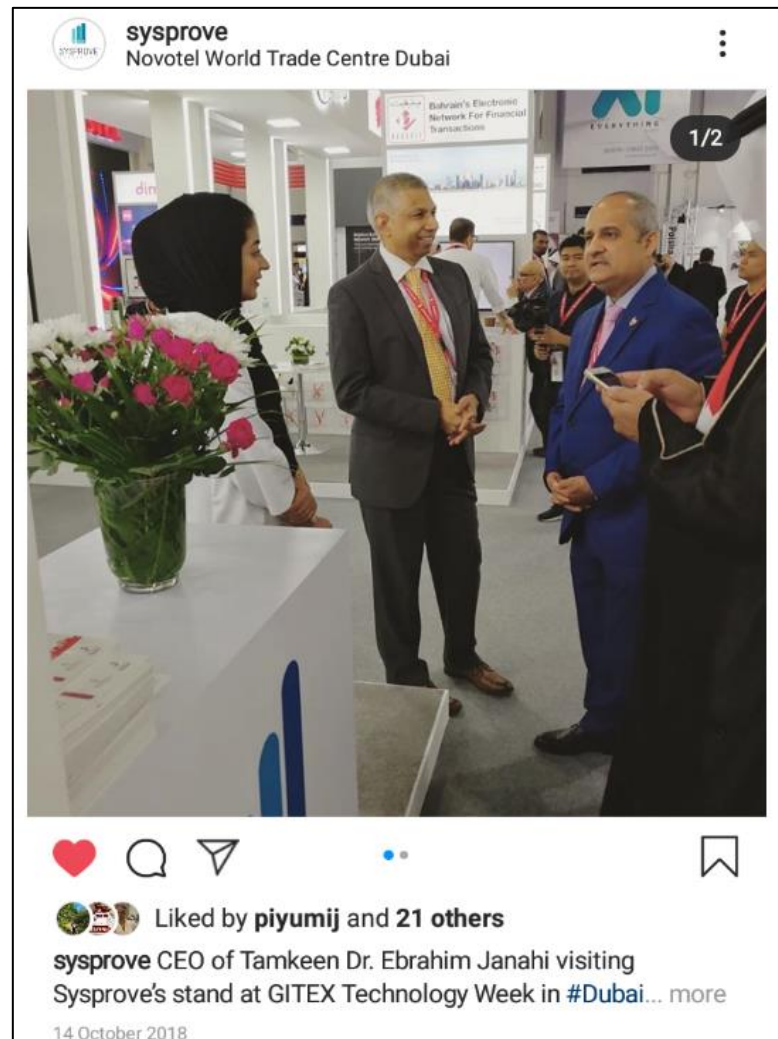
Participated in GITEX 2017 exhibition in Dubai, UAE

The screenshot shows a LinkedIn post from the company 'sysprove'. The post features a large graphic for 'Visit us at GITEX 2017' with the Sysprove Consulting logo. The graphic lists four topics: Cybersecurity Governance, IT Governance, Process Mining, and Business Process Management. It also mentions '37TH GITEX TECHNOLOGY WEEK' and the dates '08 ~ 12 OCT 2017' at the 'DUBAI WORLD TRADE CENTRE'. The location is specified as 'Sheikh Rashid Hall, SR-D1, SR-E1, SR-D20'. The post includes social media icons for Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn, along with the handle '@sysprove' and the website 'www.sysprove.com'. The post text says 'sysprove Visit us at #GITEX #gitextechweek #bahrainpavilion #Dubai #gitex2017 # sysprove'. It has 1 like and was posted on October 5, 2017.

Participated in GITEX 2018 exhibition in Dubai, UAE¹⁴

The screenshot shows a LinkedIn post from the company 'sysprove'. The post features a large graphic for 'Visit us at GITEX 2018' with the Sysprove Consulting logo. The graphic lists four topics: IT Governance, Process Mining, Cyber Security Governance, and Business Process Management. It also mentions '38TH GITEX TECHNOLOGY WEEK' and the dates '14 - 18 OCTOBER 2018' at the 'DUBAI WORLD TRADE CENTRE'. The location is specified as 'Hall-2, Bahrain Pavilion'. The post includes social media icons for Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn, along with the handle '@sysprove' and the website 'www.sysprove.com'. The post text says 'sysprove Visit our stand at #Gitex Technology Week, Hall 2, Bahrain Pavilion, from 14 to 18 October. We Look forward to meeting you!! #gitex #gitextechweek #gitex2018 #Dubai #Bahrain #bahrainpavilion'. It was liked by 'sofie31787 and 7 others' and was posted on October 10, 2018.

¹⁴ Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm Al-Quwain, and Fujairah




Appendix I.2

Organised breakfast mornings for CXOs



Media Outlet	Gulf Daily News
Type	English Daily Newspaper, Bahrain
Circulation	50,000
Page	14 (Business)
Page	1 of 1



■ Business requirements should drive information security and how information security governance provides the means of effectively managing risk were the key takeaways from a British Bahrain Business Forum (BBBF) meeting. Organized by the BBBF's information communications and technology (ICT) special interest group in collaboration with Sysprove Consulting and David Lynas Consulting, the event was held at the Capital Club Bahrain. The keynote presentation was delivered by John Czaplewski, a director at David Lynas Consulting, a UK based enterprise security architecture consultancy. BBBF ICT special interest group head and Sysprove Consulting CEO Ravi Jayasundera also spoke at the event. Above, at the event are, from left, Mr Czaplewski and Mr Jayasundera with BBBF executive board members Mike Jackson and Mark Gravener.

Media Outlet	Al Bilad
Type	English News Portal, Bahrain
Link	http://en.albiladpress.com/article/30467
Page	1 of 3

Information security in focus

Expert stresses that business requirements should drive information security and helps manage risk effectively



Information Communications & Technology (ICT), Special Interest Group of the British Bahrain Business Forum (BBBF), in collaboration with Sysprove Consulting and David Lynas Consulting, hosted a meeting for ICT professionals at the Capital Club.

The presentation provided insights on how to transform a traditional information security function to meet the needs of the modern enterprise, and how information security governance and enterprise security architecture can lead the transformation of information security to deliver demonstrable value to businesses.

Appendix I.3 Participated in community outreach activities



Minimising Cybersecurity Risks Through Employee Awareness

“Employees are an organisation's greatest asset, but they can also be the biggest cybersecurity risk.”

According to a study by the *‘Information Security Magazine’* malware installed unintentionally by employees was the top concern of respondents (73%), ahead of stolen or compromised credentials (66%), stolen data (65%), and abuse of admin privileges (63%).

“Motivate and guide your staff to be a part of the solution and not a source of problems”

Tel: +973 1725 1676
+973 3963 0392
Email: Info@sysprove.com
Web: www.sysprove.com

Sysprove Consulting WLL
PO Box 26494
Adliya
Kingdom of Bahrain

Do your staff know how to distinguish between a 'Phishing' email and a 'genuine' email?
Do your staff know what to do in case of a cybersecurity incident?
Have you conducted awareness among staff on safeguarding information systems?

Sysprove Consulting can help!!

Sysprove Consulting, as part of its cybersecurity services, conducts awareness on information security & cybersecurity to employees to safeguard your organisation and themselves against cyber threats. The awareness follows practical methods to engage the staff members being part of the solution. Several concepts and scenarios are discussed, supported by tips and guidelines.

Our approach is based on first 'discovering' and understanding risks the organisation may face together with the context of the organisation. Based on that, we customise the awareness training programme to fit your organisation's needs.

Sysprove also reviews the Acceptable Usage Policy (AUP) and other related policies and procedures of the organisation and builds a set of guidelines based on the business environment and risks. This is an integral component of delivering an awareness focussed on your organisation.

This approach enables Sysprove to tailor the training programme to cover the risks posed to the organisation, while taking into consideration industry good practices. The training is aligned with industry standards such as ISO 27001, ISO 27035, ISO 22301 and NIST.

Topics covered include:

1. Importance of information security for the organisation, and employee
2. Importance of Security Policies
3. Social engineering and how to avoid becoming a victim
4. Safe browsing & Email good practices
5. Access Control Responsibilities
6. Preventing Identity Theft
7. Physical Security Threats
8. Security in public spaces and while travelling
9. Reporting security incidents and action in case of an incident
10. Specific topics based on the context of the organisation

Sysprove will also be sharing a number of tips which are invaluable at a personal level to safeguard employees and their loved ones from cyber threats.

DISCOVERY
CUSTOMISE TRAINING
DELIVERY OF AWARENESS
FOLLOW UP & REVIEW

Sysprove has conducted awareness sessions at several organisations to enable employees become aware of the guidelines to follow and minimise cybersecurity risks.







Rotary Year 2017-2018



RCM REGULAR MEETING



SUNDAY 27th-AUG-2017

12:45 PM FOR 13:15 PM



GULF HOTEL-AWAL BALLROOM



Know Your Member



Guess Who?

Quiz:

Which are the 9 member countries of Rotary District 2452?

Message/Whatsapp your answer to 36704222

(first correct answer gets a surprise gift)

ALL ARE

WELCOME



Speaker:
Ravi Jayasundera

Topic:
"Are you protected? Practical guidelines on Cyber Safety for individuals and families"

Do you use a Smartphone?
Do you use Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram or Twitter?
Do you have an email?
Do you use Whatsapp?

Ravi will share a number of tips to protect you from the various cyber threats.

SUMMARY:

IT and the Internet has become an integral part of our life. Whether it is the use of IT systems at the workplace, or use of social media or other tools at a personal level, our dependence on IT has grown over the years. Increased usage of IT has exposed us to a multitude of challenges as well. These include identity theft, credit card fraud, hacking of personal devices, cyber bullying, etc. There is a growing trend of cyber attacks on individuals. Understanding the associated risks and taking precautions can avert situations which can threaten individuals and families.

The presentation covers a range of topics on the use of IT, and provides practical tips to protect from cyber threats.

Ravi is the CEO and Founder of Sysprove Consulting, a business process and strategic IT consultancy based in the Kingdom of Bahrain. He works with both government and private sector organisations on the strategic usage of IT and information security. Ravi has over 25 years' experience in consulting and IT management roles with leading global organisations. Prior to Sysprove he was the Head of Information Systems at GARMCO at its head office in Bahrain and its global subsidiaries. When he isn't busy helping his clients with IT consultancy, Ravi performs research on cyber safety and conducts awareness sessions to empower professionals, parents, teachers and children. Safeguarding children from cyber threats is a cause he is passionate. He visits schools regularly to spread the message on cyber safety. Ravi is a Chartered Engineer and a Fellow of the British Computer Society (BCS), the Chartered Institute for IT. Ravi is a board member of the ISACA Bahrain Chapter and a part-time faculty member for the masters' programme of the University of Strathclyde and the University of Bahrain. He regularly presents and publishes on IT governance and IT security related topics.



SLOS
Sri Lankan Quantity Surveyors
United Arab Emirates

“ARE YOU PROTECTED? PRACTICAL GUIDELINES ON CYBER SAFETY FOR PROFESSIONALS”

Key areas of discussion

IT and the Internet has become an integral part of our life. Whether it is the use of IT systems at the workplace, or use of social media or other tools at a personal level, our dependence on IT has grown over the years. Increased usage of IT has exposed us to a multitude of challenges as well. There is a growing trend of cyber-attacks on individuals. Understanding the associated risks and taking precautions can avert situations which can threaten individuals and families.

Topics covered include:
Evolution of IT and its ramifications | Exploitations and hacks together with implications to professionals | Protecting information assets both at workplace and personal life | Security and confidentiality | Social media and protecting your online image | Guidelines to better manage your PCs, connected devices and gadgets | General tips and tricks on how to become a more effective user of technology | Recovering from an identity theft or hack

If you use a Smartphone, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Email or Whatsapp, Mr. Ravi will share a number of tips to protect you from the various cyber threats.



Mr. RAVI JAYASUNDERA
CEng, MBA, FBCS, CTP, CISA, CGEIT

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
CPD NO 10- 2017 | DUBAI

Speaker

- Founder and CEO of Sysprove Consulting, a business process and strategic IT consultancy based in the Kingdom of Bahrain
- Over 25 years experience as a Strategic IT and Cybersecurity Consultant working with both government and private sector organisations in the Middle East
- Chartered Engineer and a Fellow of the British Computer Society (BCS), the Chartered Institute for IT.
- Board member of the ISACA Bahrain Chapter and a part-time faculty member for the masters' programme of the University of Strathclyde and the University of Bahrain.

Limited seats are available and will be served based on registration (Limited to Sri Lankan Quantity Surveyors only)

You are kindly requested to complete the online registration to confirm your participation as early as possible to reserve your seat.

Organised by

Sri Lankan Quantity Surveyors
United Arab Emirates

DATE : 28TH NOVEMBER 2017

TIME : 7.00 PM TO 10.00 PM

VENUE : AL FUTTAIM LEARNING CENTER, DUBAI



“Protecting children from cyber threats”



SACRED HEART SCHOOL
KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

Ravi Jayasundera

Ravi is the CEO of Sysprove Consulting, a business process and strategic IT consultancy based in the Kingdom of Bahrain. He works with both government and private sector organisations in the region on the strategic usage of IT and Information Security.

Ravi has been accredited by the US Department of Homeland Security as a partner promoting cyber safety. He visits schools regularly to spread the message on cyber safety and made over 25 presentations to schools and professional associations.





LOOK OVER YOUR SHOULDER

f @LOYShoulder

t @LOYShoulder

i @LOYShoulder

© 2018. Ravi Jayasundera: ravi@sysprove.com

Summary of community outreach activities

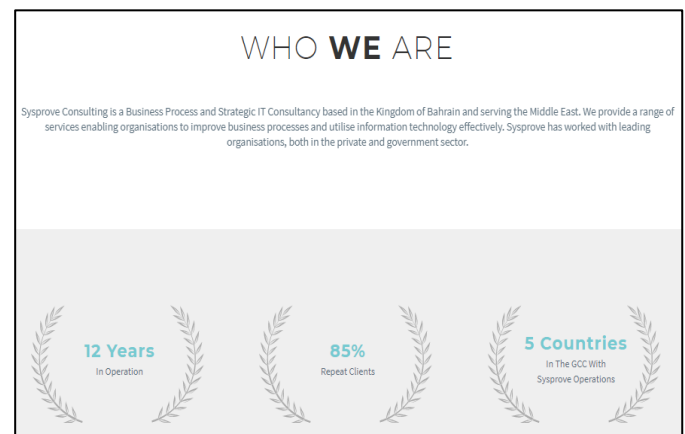
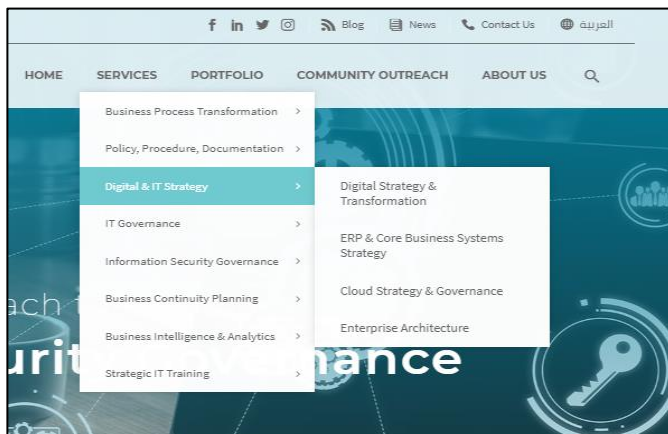
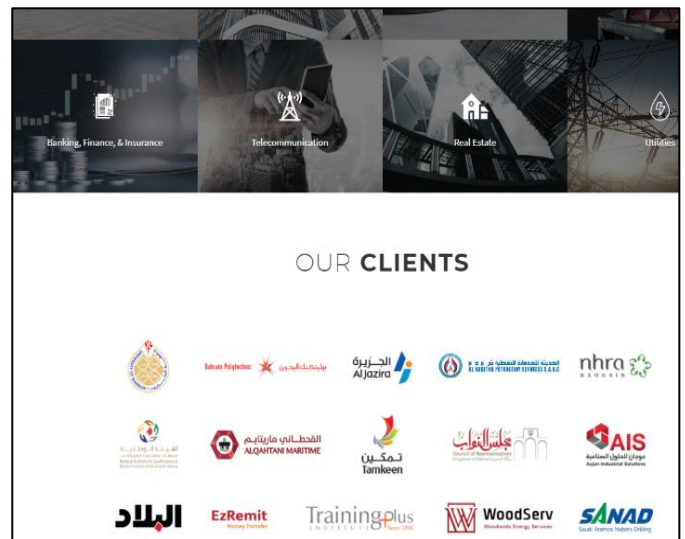
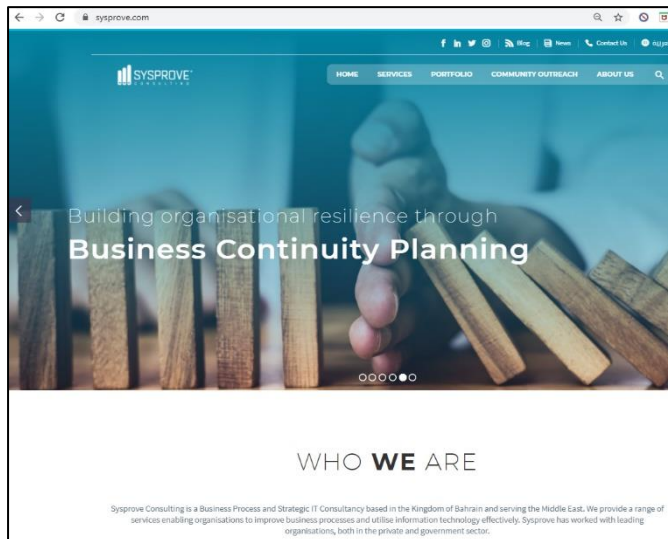
S/No	Date	Delivered to	Subject	Venue
1	04-Aug-17	Sacred Heart Catholic Church	Protecting children from cyber threats	Sacred Heart Church community hall (OLAA)
2	04-Sep-17	Rotary Club of Manama	Are you protected? Practical guidelines on cyber safety for individuals and families	The Gulf Hotel, Awal ballroom
3	09-Sep-17	The Asian School, Manama (students)	Are you protected? Practical guidelines on cyber safety for professionals	The school auditorium
4	21-Oct-17	The Asian School, Manama (parents)	Are you protected? Practical guidelines on cyber safety for individuals and families	The school auditorium
5	28-Nov-17	The Sacred Heart School, Isa Town	Are you protected? Practical guidelines on Cyber Safety for individuals and families	The school auditorium
6	09-Jan-18	Quantity Surveyors Associations, UAE	Are you protected? Practical guidelines on cyber safety for professionals	Al Futtaim Training Center, Dubai, UAE
7	15-Jan-18	Sacred Heart School (teachers)	Protecting children from cyber threats	Sacred Heart school hall
8	16-Jan-18	Sacred Heart School (parents)	Protecting children from cyber threats	Sacred Heart school hall
9	17-Jan-18	Sacred Heart School (students)	Being safe from cyberthreats	Sacred Heart school hall
10	20-Mar-18	ISACA, Sri Lanka chapter	Defining and information security incident response procedure	Royal College Union Skills Centre
11	09-Mar-18	Bahrain British Business Forum (BBBF) Bahrain	Are you protected? Practical guidelines on cyber safety for professionals	Capital Club, Bahrain
12	03-Apr-18	Dhahran Techno Valley	Are you protected? Practical guidelines for legal professionals	Dhahran Techno Valley, King Fahad
13	08-May-18	Rotary Club of Salmaniya	Are you protected? Practical guidelines on cyber safety for professionals	Diplomat Hotel, Manama
14	28-May-18	Rotary Club of Adliya	Are you protected? Practical guidelines on cyber safety for professionals	Diplomat Hotel, Manama
15	31-May-18	Multi National School (MNS)	Protecting children from cyber threats	School Hall, Bahrain
16	07-Jun-18	Nadeen International School	Protecting children from cyber threats	School Hall, Bahrain
17	09-Jun-18	Newton Legal	Are you protected? Practical guidelines on cyber safety for professionals	New legal office
18	14-Jun-18	US Embassy (wardens)	Protecting children from cyber threats	US Embassy Saudi Arabia, Dhahran consulate
19	06-Sep-18	US Embassy, Dhahran consulate (Staff)	Protecting children from cyber threats	US Embassy Saudi Arabia, Dhahran consulate
20	07-Sep-18	THMC (Thattai Hindu Merchants Community)	Are you protected? Practical guidelines on cyber safety for professionals	Kovil community hall

Appendix I.4 Improved brand visibility

Appointed a marketing agency

Yoiku PR SPC CR No: 112984-1 YOIKUPR TELL YOUR STORY.	Scope of Work Date 26.03.2018 Valid Until 25.04.2018 Quote # YPRQ_57 Customer ID Sysprove Consulting												
Customer: Ravi Jayasundera Sysprove Consulting W.L.L. PO Box 26494 Kingdom of Bahrain Phone: +973 3963 0392 Email: ravi@sysprove.com	Quote/Project Description 12 month PR, media relations and events management programme for Sysprove Consulting. A total of 4 events during the year. Project Duration 01 April 2018 - 31 March 2019												
<table><thead><tr><th>Description</th><th>Rate in BD</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Press Release</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Post-event press releases Drafting of press release x 4 and distribution to local Arabic and English print and online media. Includes following up, selling in, monitoring for coverage, compilation and submission of coverage report. Arabic translation will be charged separately as per word count at USD 0.25 per word. Costing is for 4 releases during the contract period.</td><td>1,300.00</td></tr><tr><td>Event logistics management</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Management of Sysprove Consulting events x 4 Assumes approx 30 attendees per event. Includes sending invitations to invitees (Sysprove Consulting to provide invitee list with the appropriate contact details), following up for attendance. Attending, managing and coordination at the event, organising roll-up banners. Note: Excludes all 3rd party costs such as venue hire, F&B, branding, giveaways, development of presentations, printing, photography, etc.</td><td>1,100.00</td></tr><tr><td>Subtotal</td><td>BD 2,400.00</td></tr></tbody></table>	Description	Rate in BD	Press Release		Post-event press releases Drafting of press release x 4 and distribution to local Arabic and English print and online media. Includes following up, selling in, monitoring for coverage, compilation and submission of coverage report. Arabic translation will be charged separately as per word count at USD 0.25 per word. Costing is for 4 releases during the contract period.	1,300.00	Event logistics management		Management of Sysprove Consulting events x 4 Assumes approx 30 attendees per event. Includes sending invitations to invitees (Sysprove Consulting to provide invitee list with the appropriate contact details), following up for attendance. Attending, managing and coordination at the event, organising roll-up banners. Note: Excludes all 3rd party costs such as venue hire, F&B, branding, giveaways, development of presentations, printing, photography, etc.	1,100.00	Subtotal	BD 2,400.00	
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Website re-designed giving a new look



Social media coverage

The screenshot displays the Facebook profile of Sysprove Consulting. The page header includes the company name, a search bar, and navigation links like 'Page', 'Ad Center', 'Inbox', 'Manage Jobs', 'Notifications', 'Insights', and 'More'. The main content area features a post from Sysprove Consulting, published on August 18, 2020. The post text states: 'As part of an initiative during the COVID19 pandemic we have revamped our website to provide a new look and include additional content. Visit www.sysprove.com for more information and insights on IT governance, Cyber security and process transformation. Please follow us on @sysprove on Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.... See More'. The post includes a video thumbnail showing a laptop screen with the Sysprove website and the text 'Robotic Process Automation (RPA)'. Below the video, there is a 'Boost This Post Again' section showing 1,264 people reached and 65 engagements. The right sidebar contains a 'Page Tips' section with suggestions like 'Know Friends Who Might Like Your Page?' and 'Get Personalized Ad Recommendations for Sysprove Consulting...'. It also shows 56 followers, 14,761 post reach this week, and a 'Community' section with a post by Zaharan Haleed and 29 other friends. The 'About' section at the bottom right lists the phone number 1725 1676, a 'Send Message' button, the website <http://www.sysprove.com>, and the company type 'Consulting Agency'.

Sysprove Consulting
Published by sysprove [7] · August 18 ·

As part of an initiative during the COVID19 pandemic we have revamped our website to provide a new look and include additional content.
Visit www.sysprove.com for more information and insights on IT governance, Cyber security and process transformation.
Please follow us on @sysprove on Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.... See More

Robotic Process Automation (RPA)
Guaranteed cost savings & improved efficiency

Sysprove Consulting
Our new website is now live
Visit us at www.sysprove.com

Boost This Post Again
This post is no longer boosted. You can view the results and add budget to continue showing it to more people.

1,264 People Reached
65 Engagements
[Boost Again](#)

Boosted on Aug 21, 2020
By Ravi Jayasundera

People Reached	Post Engagemen
1.3K	80

[View Results](#)

Page Tips See All

- Know Friends Who Might Like Your Page?**
Invite friends to like Sysprove Consulting and help you connect with more people.
- Get Personalized Ad Recommendations for Sysprove Consul...**
Learn which types of ads are recommended for Sysprove Consul... by answering a few quick questions.
- How to Create Effective Posts**
Short, visual posts created for the right audience are more successful.

[See All Page Tips](#)

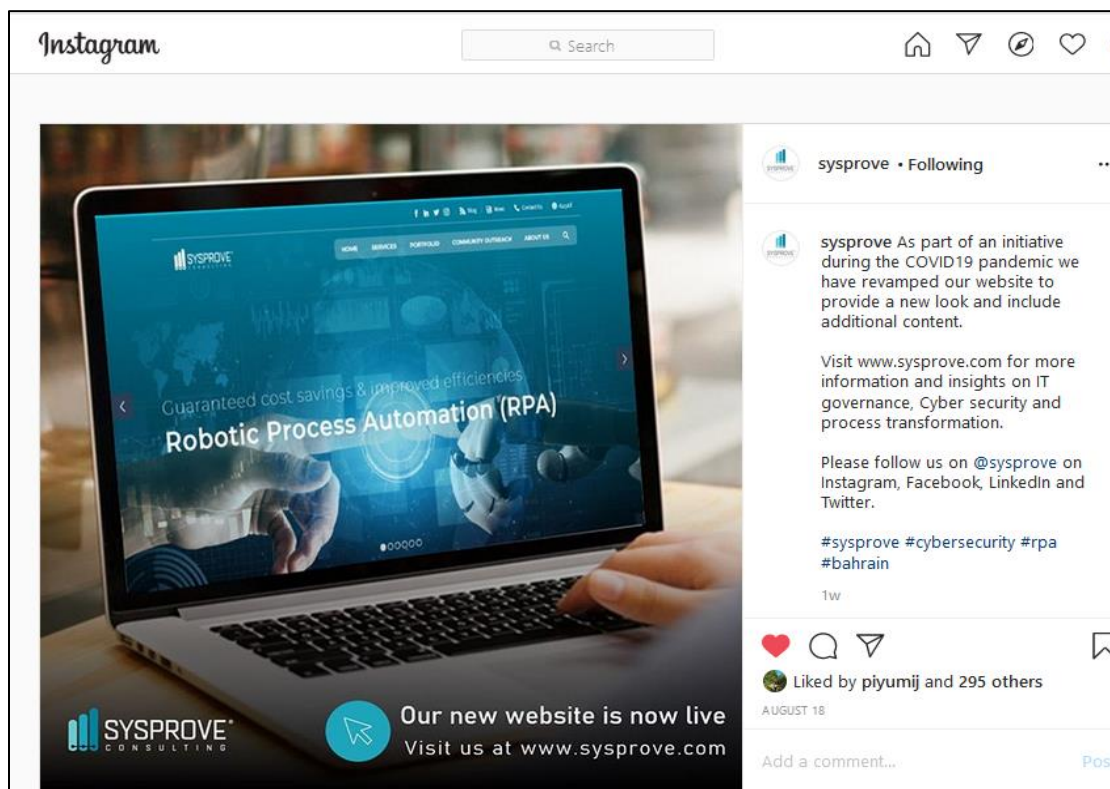
56 followers
14,761 post reach this week

Community See All

Zaharan Haleed and 29 other friends like this
[Invite Friends](#)
56 people like this
56 people follow this

About See All

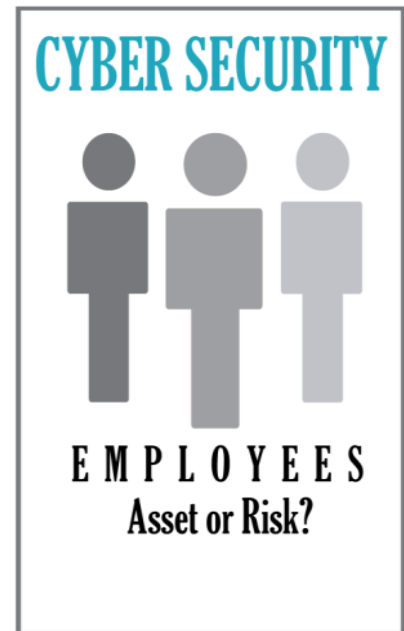
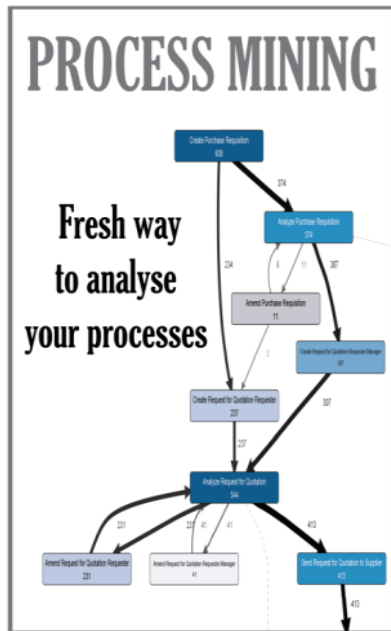
1725 1676
[Send Message](#)
<http://www.sysprov...> [Promote Website](#)
Consulting Agency



Re-designed the company profile



Designed and printed brochures



Appendix I.5 Added new services to Org. A's portfolio

Robotic Process Automation (RPA)

ROBOTIC PROCESS AUTOMATION (RPA)

Home → Business Process Transformation → Robotic Process Automation (RPA)

Robotic process automation (RPA) consists of automated software robots that performs tasks otherwise performed by organization's employees. These robots save time and eliminate or reduce the need for human intervention to conduct time-consuming, repetitive, and monotonous tasks. With the adoption of RPA organisations can free employees for more rewarding and productive activities. Further the robots will function on a 24x7 basis, and with faster turnaround time thereby improving throughput, processing time, accuracy, and achieving overall cost reductions. With the advances in technology RPA solutions are increasingly capable of performing complex tasks while benefiting from artificial intelligence and learning.

ISO22301 Business Continuing Planning

BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT

Home → Business Continuity Planning (BCP) → Business Continuity Management

Sysprove's extensive experience in Business Process Management and Strategic IT contributes to providing organisations with a practical and effective BCP approach.




Our approach towards business continuity is based on the internationally known [ISO 22301](#) standard and other [industry frameworks](#). We focus on the identification of practical and implementable business continuity related plans and documentation. The plans are formed based on extensive fact gathering and understanding of the business context and its processes.




ISO27001 Information Security Governance

[sysprove.com/information-security-governance/](#)

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 [HOME](#) [SERVICES](#) [PORTFOLIO](#) [COMMUNITY OUTREACH](#) [ABOUT US](#) [Q](#)



INFORMATION SECURITY GOVERNANCE

[Home](#) → [Information Security Governance](#)

Information & Cyber Security is no longer a stand-alone concept, every department, process, and individual carry a certain responsibility towards ensuring information and cyber security. We help organisations develop their information security governance strategy and framework in line with industry proven standards such as ISO 27001, and SABSA®.

ISO9001 Quality Management System

ISO 9001 PREPARATION

[Home](#) → [Policy, Procedure, Documentation](#) → [ISO 9001 Preparation](#)

Sysprove has helped several clients from different industries to prepare & achieve ISO 9001 (Quality Management System) standard and certification.



Our approach is based on defining a robust and 'living' Quality Management System by understanding the organisation's processes, risks, operations and providing solutions based on good practices. Sysprove believes it is important to achieve more than just the minimum requirements to fully benefit from implementing the ISO 9001 standard.



Taking a **process-based approach** and commitment to continuous improvement are the foundation of the ISO 9001, and we at Sysprove have been assisting organisations to improve their business processes as well as continuously enhancing our approach to help organisations achieve value for the last 12 years.